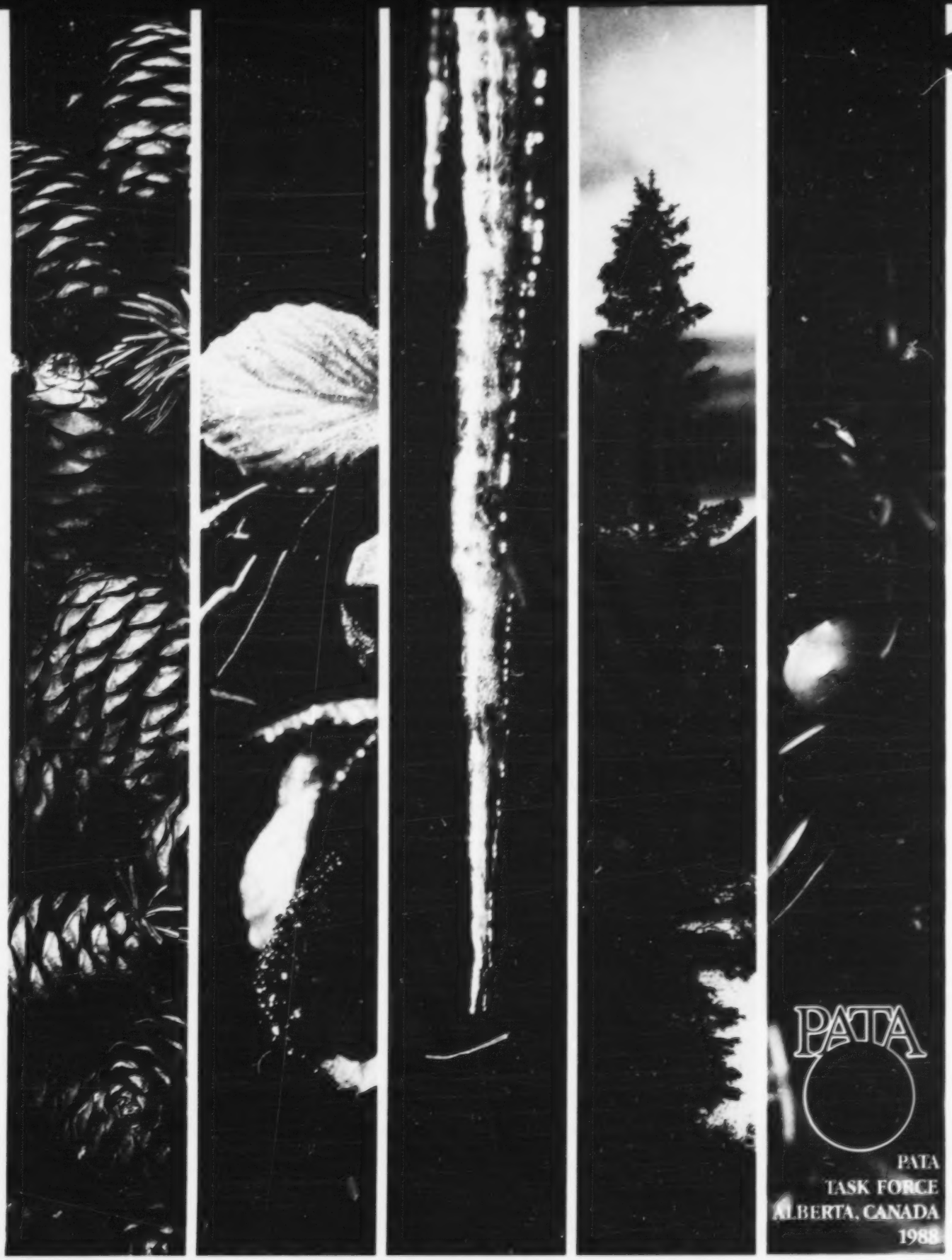

PATA
TASK FORCE
ALBERTA, CANADA
1988

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION OF ALBERTA

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PATA TASK FORCE

ALBERTA

CANADA

1988

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December 15, 1989

Mr. Kenneth Chamberlain
Executive Vice President
Pacific Asia Travel Association
1 Montgomery Street
Telesis Tower, Suite 1750
San Francisco, California
94104 USA

Dear Mr. Chamberlain:

On behalf of the PATA Alberta Task Force, I am pleased to enclose our completed report entitled "Tourism Development in the Rocky Mountain Region of Alberta". This Task Force was established at the request of the Alberta Government Department of Tourism in order to evaluate the tourism potential in the southwest and western portions of the Province of Alberta.

Recognizing the time limitations and the immense size of the study area it was not possible to do a thorough analysis of all tourism components, however, we do feel that our best professional opinion has been expressed for those areas we did cover.

Of all the issues the Task Force confronted during our one week stay in Alberta, none was as overwhelming as the issue of development in Alberta's National Parks. It is important to note that we recognize the seriousness of the concern, particularly as it relates to pressure for development in environmentally sensitive areas.

We hope the observations and recommendations set out in this final report will be of assistance to the Government of Alberta in its decisions on future tourism development in the province.

Sincerely,

Larry Helber
Alberta Task Force Leader

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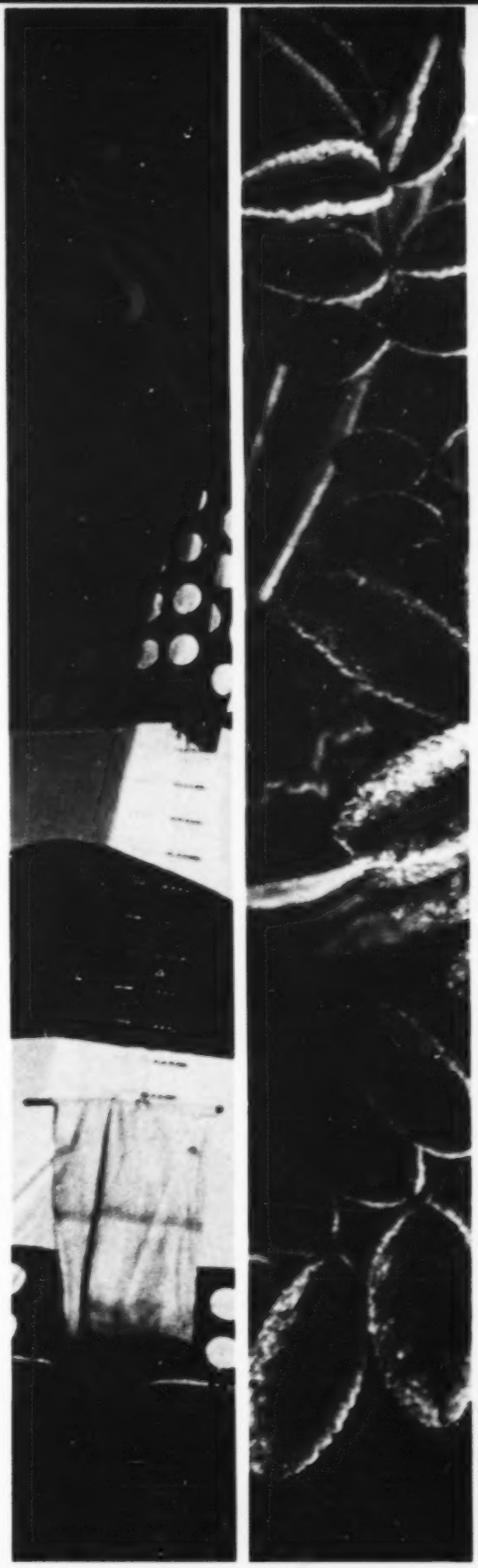

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Introduction

As part of the overall Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), the PATA Development Authority is devoted to advising and assisting PATA members in the area of product development. This includes providing planning for facility and product development, spearheading conservation of heritage resources, influencing investment policies and contributing to the development of new and improved tourist attractions and facilities.

One role of the PATA Development Authority is to organize and sponsor task force advisory teams, at the request of governments, to help define long- range objectives that consider each country or region's unique physical, social and cultural attributes. A PATA task force is operated as an advisory service to members seeking outside counsel and expertise in dealing with specific tourism opportunities. PATA task forces are unique in that the teams are made up entirely of executives currently active in the tourism industry or directly related areas. Their advice is therefore practically based on years of experience.

In October 1986 Alberta Tourism submitted a proposal requesting a task force advisory team to examine "Tourism Development in the Rocky Mountain Region of Alberta". In November 1986 the Development Authority approved the proposal which was then approved by the PATA board of directors in January 1987.

Task Force Participants

In conjunction with PATA's head office in San Francisco five task force members were chosen, each having a strong background in at least one of the areas to be examined. The following is a list of those individuals and a brief summary of their areas of expertise.

Larry Helber - Task Force Team Leader

President
Helber, Hastert & Kimura, Planners
Honolulu, Hawaii
United States of America

Mr. Helber has over 20 years of experience in the fields of tourism and resort comprehensive planning, land development planning, site planning, city and regional planning, recreation planning and environmental impact analysis for government and private industry. He has served as a consultant to the United Nations Development Programme, International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the governments of Taiwan, Australia, French Polynesia, Malaysia, India and Fiji.

Robertson E. Collins

Principal
Tourism Development/Heritage Conservation Pte Ltd.
Singapore

Mr. Collins is actively involved in heritage conservation and tourism development worldwide. He is a member of the executive committee of the United States chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Washington), chairman of the International Committee on Cultural Tourism (Paris) and a former member of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO. He has served on the board of the Society of Architectural Historians and on the board of 1000 Friends of Oregon, a noted land use planning organization. Mr. Collins is a former trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Washington, D.C., USA), the Victorian Society in America, the Historic House Association in America and the Pacific Tropical Botanical Gardens.

Mr. Collins has written extensively, having authored an article on Italian conservation efforts following the 1978 Naples earthquake, and articles for museum and preservation magazines in America and Australia. He has assisted in the organization of a national trust in the Philippines and has served on tourism task force studies to Macau, Cairns, Singapore, Fiji, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia and the buddhist sites in India.

Shozo Noda

Senior Vice President
Corporate Planning & Related Businesses
Jetour Inc.
Tokyo, Japan

As senior vice-president of this Japanese tour wholesaling company, Mr. Noda provided the team with an indepth knowledge and understanding of the Japanese visitor market, one of Alberta's most important international market segments. He is currently responsible for mid- to long-term business planning for the company, covering the areas of market research for Japanese overseas travel, co-ordination of Jetour's overseas operation units, new business developments and public relations.

Mr. Noda has served as a tour planning specialist for many years, including four years with the New York office of New Orient Express Inc., a tour operator for orient-bound tours from the United States in the late 1960s.

Peter Yeoman

Consulting Engineer
Tourism Consultant and Tourist Company Director
Davis Ogilvie & Partners
Christchurch, New Zealand

Mr. Yeoman is a specialist in alpine planning, development, management and marketing. He was the chairman of directors for the Mount Hutt Ski Area from 1973 to 1986 and project director for implementation of tourist cableways in South Island of New Zealand. Currently Mr. Yeoman is the president of the Canterbury Promotion Council and is a member of various tourism and environment related government organizations.

Graham Hornel

Director of Communication
PATA Secretariat
Pacific Asia Travel Association
San Francisco, California,
United States of America

As director of communication for PATA in San Francisco, Mr. Hornel co-ordinates the association's international public relations programs and activities. He also has responsibility for PATA's destination publicity programs, the production of the association's major publications, publicity for and promotion of attendance at major PATA events and PATA's membership development and income generation programs. Mr. Hornel is the editor of the PATA sections of three regional editions of PATA Travel News. With his awareness of international tourism trends, Mr. Hornel provided the task force with an in-depth understanding of Alberta's ability to compete in the international marketplace and he provided an important liaison with the PATA head office.

The Alberta Situation

Alberta is Canada's fourth largest province, encompassing 661 185 square kilometres (255 285 square mi.) of varied landscape. The population of Alberta was 2.4 million in 1988. The Alberta economy is based on two primary industries; oil and gas, and agriculture. The third largest industry in the province is tourism and it is the only industry of the three which has shown steady growth in revenue and employment during the past five years.

Alberta has traditionally been an internationally recognized tourism destination as a result of its famous Rocky Mountain scenery and mountain resorts. In recent years the number of international quality attractions in Alberta has grown to include aspects of Alberta other than the Canadian Rockies. Most notably, the heritage and cultural resources displayed at the Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Drumheller and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre near Fort Macleod and the very successful commercial site, West Edmonton Mall located in the provincial capital, Edmonton.

The combination of natural, heritage and cultural resources and commercial sites offer visitors to Alberta a variety of experiences from which to choose.

While there are positive changes in the tourism industry in Alberta, there are also some concerns regarding its future growth and development. As the number of visitors to the Rocky Mountains and Eastern Slopes increases, so will the conflicts related to management of wildlife, land use and tourism development. Approximately 60 per cent of Alberta is Crown land. Much of that Crown land is in the mountains and Eastern Slopes where, under Federal or Provincial ownership, they have rarely been made available for any kind of permanent development. A combination of competing resource-based industries (e.g. forestry, coal mining, oil and gas extraction), the potential for long-term environmental damage and a general lack of recognition of tourism industry benefits have contributed to this restriction in the past. Recently, provincially held Crown lands have been recognized as one of the key elements in tourism development, and initiatives are being taken to make these lands available, either for long-term lease (e.g. Kananaskis Country) or potential sale (e.g. Westcastle). These two areas will be dealt with more specifically later in the report.

Profile of the Alberta Tourism Industry

Tourism is a major contributor to the Alberta economy, generating substantial revenues for the province and employing considerable human, financial and physical resources.

In 1987 tourism contributed approximately $2.2 billion to the economy. Of this amount, $1.09 billion is attributed to Albertans travelling within the province, $614 million by other Canadians, $351 million by United States residents and $135 million by overseas visitors.

Tourism also benefits all Albertans by supporting facilities and services that could not survive on resident demand alone. Many recreation and entertainment facilities, accommodation services and much of the province's transportation system would not exist were it not for the visitor. In 1986 it was estimated that tourism supported the equivalent of 74 000 full-time jobs in Alberta.

Of the 13 million travellers spending at least one night away from home in 1987, 9.3 million (71%) were Albertans, 2.5 million (19%) were from other Canadian provinces, 1 million (8%) came from the United States and 313 000 (2%) from other foreign countries[1]. Figure 1 indicates a further breakdown of person trips:

Figure 1: 1986 Estimates of Person Trips to Alberta by Location

Canada *		United States**		Overseas**	
Province	%	*Region*	%	*Country*	%
British Columbia	39	Pacific	34	United Kingdom	23
Saskatchewan	36	Mountain	17	Japan	17
Manitoba	8	West North Central	10	West Germany	14
Ontario	13	East North Central	11	Australia	8
Other	4	Other	28	Other	38

Sources: * Statistics Canada, Canadian Travel Survey, 1986
** Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 66-201, 1986

Sixty-five per cent of all visitors travel to Alberta by private vehicle, while 26 per cent arrive via one of the two international airports, Calgary or Edmonton.

There are approximately 42 000 accredited hotel and motel rooms in Alberta. Of these, over half (56%) are in six major destinations: 8 400 in Edmonton, 8 200 in Calgary, 4 600 in Banff National Park, 1 900 in Jasper National Park, 300 in Waterton Lakes National Park and 400 in Kananaskis Country.

Accommodation occupancy rates vary throughout Alberta and have largely reflected the health of the province's oil and gas industry. This is especially true in the rural areas of the province where much of the accommodation infrastructure is directly dependent on oil and gas field activity. The oil and gas industry has also had a major impact on accommodation occupancy rates in the province's two major cities, Edmonton and Calgary, as the business sector of these cities is geared to this industry. The oil and gas industry has not had a significant impact on the mountain destinations, but the overall economic health of the province has impacted the use of facilities in the national parks by resident Albertans.

In 1987, the provincial accommodation occupancy rate was 59.6 per cent; Edmonton's rate was 64.9 per cent, Calgary, 55.8 per cent and the Mountain destinations of Banff and Jasper, 63.4 per cent[2]. Banff and Jasper National Park occupancy rates vary substantially throughout the year (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Mountain Destinations* 1987 Hotel and Motel Occupancy Rates(%)**

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
46.8	59.9	68.8	58.9	53.6	79.2	93.8	94.2	79.5	43.0	22.4	41.1

Source: Pannell Kerr Forster, 1988
* Mountain Destinations include Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper.
** Occupancy rates are based on monthly averages of all reporting hotels, motels and motor-hotels in each designated region.

National park attendance figures (Figure 3) clearly reflect the seasonal nature of Alberta's Rocky Mountain tourism industry. The National Parks are crowded with visitors in the summer months, but have excess capacity the remainder of the year. Accommodation and attendance figures in Banff and Jasper are fairly significant in the winter months, but the ability to increase these numbers is largely dependent upon the expansion of winter attractions, particularly the ski facilities, within these National Parks.

Figure 3: Mountain Destinations 1987 Attendance* (000s)

Jan.	Feb.	Mar	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
BANFF												
179.7	175.9	206.2	221.2	274.5	304.8	592.2	526.5	310.0	226.4	134.6	177.1	3329.2
JASPER												
61.2	61.5	96.0	121.2	141.7	220.5	396.4	388.3	197.0	113.8	53.3	82.6	1933.5
WATERTON												
14.5	12.1	12.6	23.7	49.1	89.1	151.4	134.0	51.7	25.6	18.6	19.5	602.0
MONTHLY TOTALS												
255.4	249.5	314.8	366.1	465.3	614.4	1140.0	1048.8	558.7	365.8	206.5	279.2	5864.7

Source: Environment Canada - Parks, socio-economic branch 1988

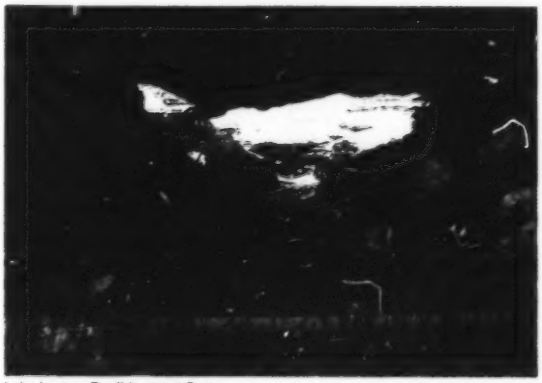
* Attendance is reported as the number of visits to National Parks in Alberta. Visits are defined as entries onto a site by a person engaged in recreation, heritage appreciation or tourism activity. Pass-through traffic is not included.

During the 1987/88 downhill skiing season, from November to May, there were 990 400 skier days at the major Rocky Mountain ski resorts[4]. The number of skier days is based on attendance at the following ski resorts: Sunshine Village, Lake Louise and Mount Norquay in Banff National Park, Marmot Basin in Jasper National Park and Fortress Mountain and Nakiska in Kananaskis Country.

[1]Alberta Tourism, strategic planning branch, 1989
[2]Alberta Tourism, strategic planning branch, 1989
[4]This figure is based on number of day tickets and season passes sold during the 1987/88 skiing season.

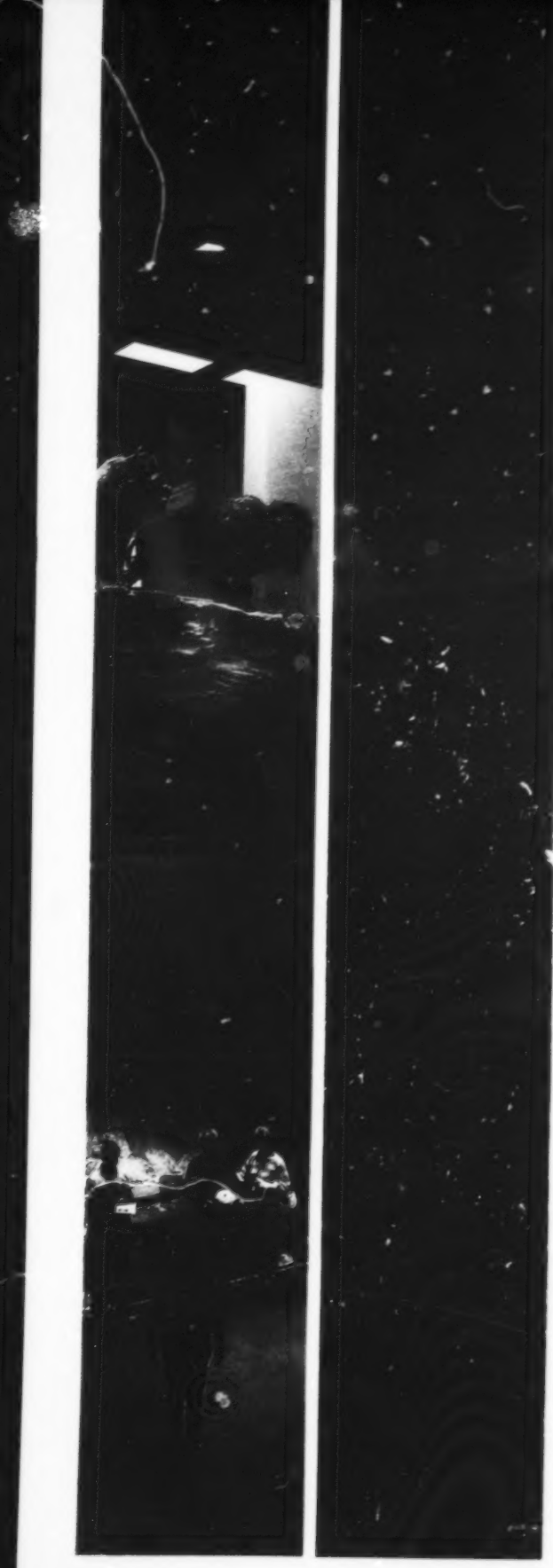
Chief John Snow, Stony Indian Band, Alberta foothills
Courtesy: Alberta Government

Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Lakes National Park
Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



Lake Louise, Banff National Park
Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Frank Slide, Crowsnest Pass
Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



A 1982 survey of non-resident visitors to Alberta indicated these visitors felt the most important experiences of their trips focused on the unspoiled natural beauty and interesting scenery of the province. To them Alberta was synonymous with its wilderness. However, there are many different types of wilderness users. Many individuals are satisfied with visual contact with the outdoors through a bus or hotel window, while others demand the total outdoor experience. Different user groups expect different levels of service, from international quality accommodation and restaurants to back-country camping sites.

The demands being placed upon the Rocky Mountain region of Alberta by Albertans and non-residents alike continue to increase. There are, however, limits to development which can occur in these fragile environments before the very reasons these visitors come to the Rocky Mountains are destroyed. There must be a balance between appropriate development and preservation. The challenge is to achieve this balance and still allow Alberta to compete in the international tourism arena.

In order to begin to understand the tourism components required to meet this challenge, Alberta Tourism invited a Pacific Asia Travel Association task force to come to Alberta in July 1988. It was obvious from the outset that the task force would not be able to gain a detailed understanding of the entire Alberta Rocky Mountain region in a one week field reconnaissance, but by visiting a variety of selected areas they would be able to obtain an appreciation of the extent and variety of resources in the region and the current level of development.

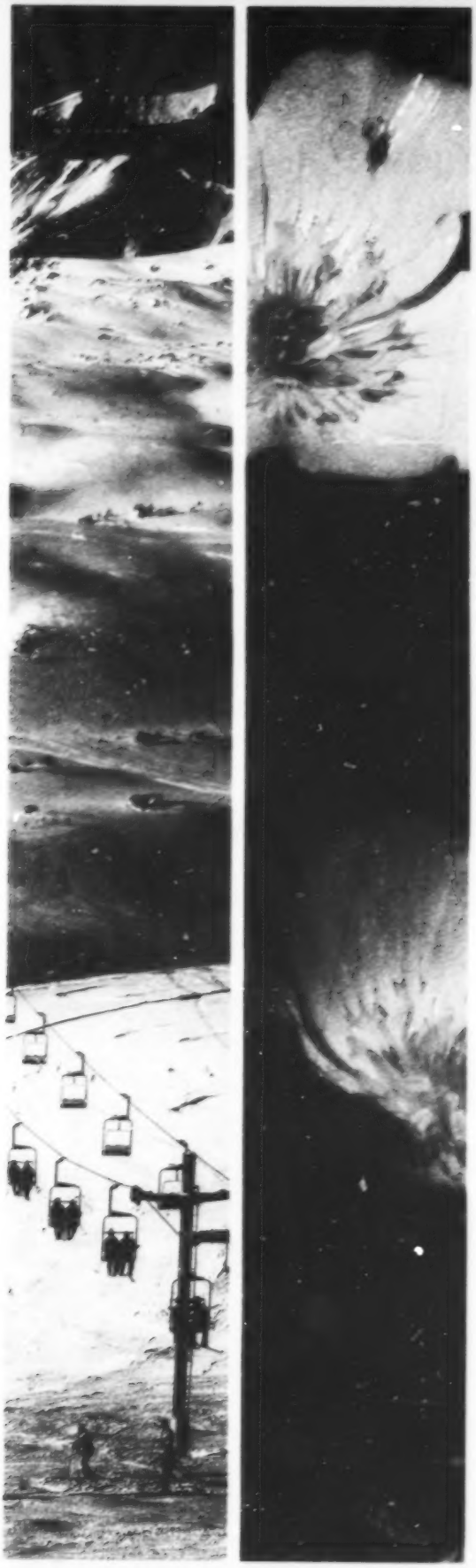
Bearing in mind Alberta's current market profile, and with some view to Alberta's potential markets, the overall objectives of the task force were to:

1. Provide comments on the appropriateness of current tourism developments within the region.
2. Identify those areas which are presently overdeveloped and those which are underdeveloped. Provide recommendations as to what could be done in these areas to better serve future visitors.
3. Provide recommendations on requirements needed to attract international visitors.
4. Provide recommendations on requirements necessary to maintain the wildland image of the region.
5. Provide recommendations on what could be done to increase the opportunity for visitors to experience the Rocky Mountains.

This document is intended to provide an independent perspective on the global value of the Alberta Rocky Mountain region and recommendations on the amount of development the region can withstand while retaining its wilderness qualities.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT ARE STRICTLY THOSE OF THE PATA TASK FORCE AND DO NOT REPRESENT POLICY OF THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT.

Task Force Objectives



The Rocky Mountain Region of Alberta studied by the task force included three National Parks (Jasper, Banff, and Waterton) and one major recreation area (Kananaskis Country). These four areas total 22 094 square km (8 531 square mi.) or three per cent of Alberta's land base. In addition, the task force toured several sites in southern Alberta and one site in northern Alberta outside the designated areas.

During the six days spent in Alberta, the task force had an opportunity to observe and evaluate 19 locations.

The Study Area

Town of Fort Macleod

The town of Fort Macleod, population 3 123, is located near the junction of Highways 2 and 3 in southwestern Alberta, approximately a two-hour drive from Calgary. The downtown core of Fort Macleod, southern Alberta's oldest settlement, has been declared the Province's first Historic Area. The area contains some 30 historically and architecturally significant structures which include a variety of wood frame buildings dating from the late 1890s and many brick structures from the early 1900s. An extensive restoration and preservation program is being carried out so the history of early settlement will be preserved for future generations.

In 1874 the Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP), later the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), established their first outpost at this location. The Fort Museum represents the first outpost and features displays on the NWMP, the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNWMP), the RCMP, the Native Indians of southern Alberta and the early settlers of Fort Macleod. A special summer attraction is the Fort Museum's Mounted Patrol Musical Ride.

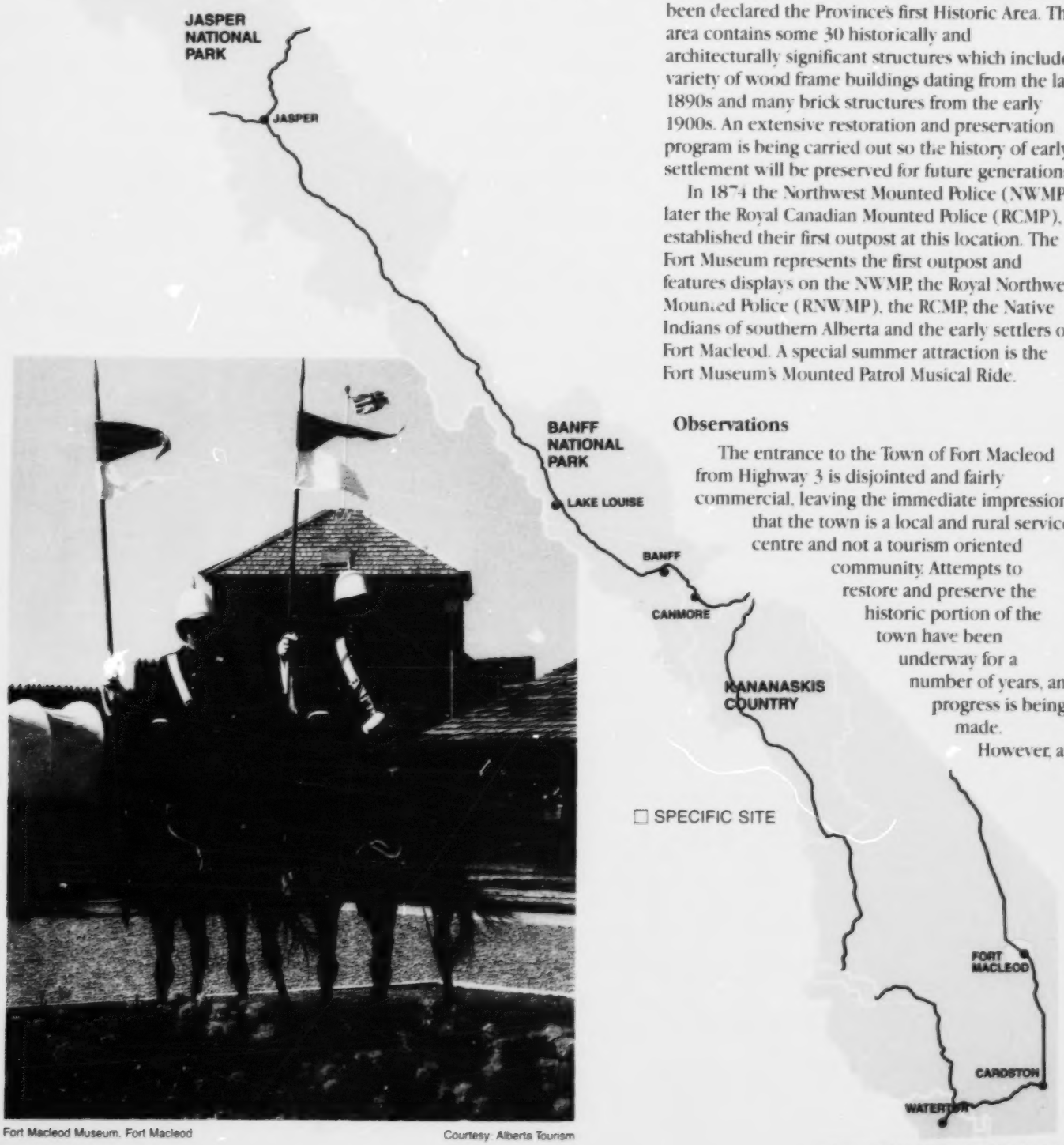
Fort Macleod Museum, Fort Macleod

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Observations

The entrance to the Town of Fort Macleod from Highway 3 is disjointed and fairly commercial, leaving the immediate impression that the town is a local and rural service centre and not a tourism oriented community. Attempts to restore and preserve the historic portion of the town have been underway for a number of years, and progress is being made.

However, a



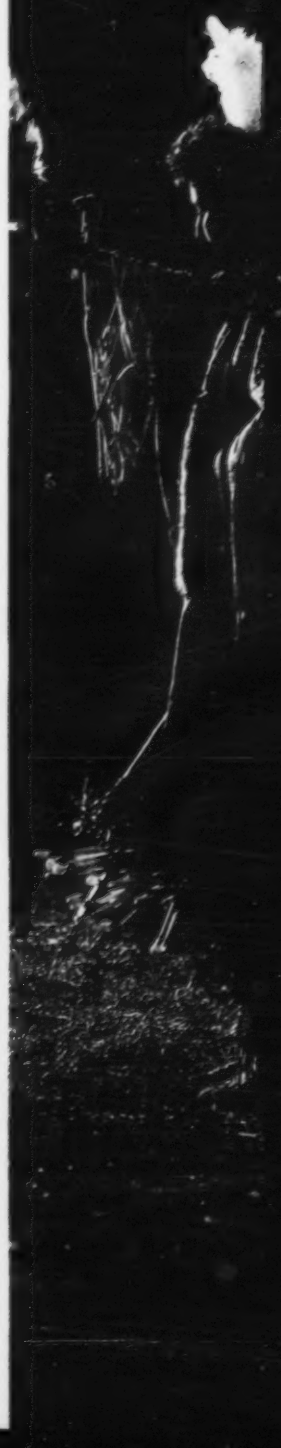
significant investment of time and money will be required to complete the historic theme in appropriate areas of the community.

The community of Fort Macleod has an attraction, the Fort Museum, which has potential to draw international visitors. The RCMP, their history and mounted musical ride displays have great appeal to the foreign visitor. In order to capitalize on the potential of this site, the integrity of the environment surrounding the Fort Museum has to be improved to increase its visual appeal. The fort currently sits on a scenically located bluff overlooking the Oldman River, but backs onto one of the main streets in town. The view from the road on a busy day reveals two lanes of traffic and recreation vehicles (RVs) parked on both sides of the roadway, resulting in a negative image of the fort entrance.

The tourist services and facilities located in Fort Macleod are not of a national/international quality and are currently limiting the potential use of the area by touring visitors. Upgraded facilities could enhance the attractiveness of the area.

Recommendations

1. The community should be encouraged to continue to restore historic buildings and recreate original store fronts from old photographs and historic records.
2. The modern buildings in town should not be made to look like their historic counterparts by covering them in false historic fronts. However, an effort should be made to ensure that future renovations and new construction are controlled to prevent potentially distracting structures.
3. The Fort Museum should be promoted much more strongly to the international visitors than is currently being done.
4. The visual appeal of the entrance to the Fort Museum must be improved in order to set the theme of this historic era. RV parking should be accommodated in a less prominent location near the fort. Further, some consideration should be given to prohibiting parking on the street adjacent to the fort. This would allow excellent photo opportunities and would enhance visitor appreciation of the size and location of the fort.
5. The community may wish to consider a more precisely defined historic district or zone around the fort in order to allow the fort environs to be more easily managed.
6. As it is difficult to get an appreciation of the Fort Museum from the townsite, the community may wish to consider upgrading access to a location across the river which could be used as a viewpoint and picnic spot for auto travellers or photographers.



Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre

Native teepees, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Officially opened on July 1, 198~ the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre is located 18 km (11 mi.) west of Highway 2. Fort Macleod and Pincher Creek are the nearest communities (populations of 3 123 and 3 ~12 respectively).

For over 10 000 years, the plains Indians stampeded mighty herds of buffalo to their deaths at jump sites across the western plains in order to provide food and materials for clothing and shelter. Designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1981, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump was used for more than 5 600 years by the plains Indians and is among the largest and most well-preserved of these jump sites.

The $10 million interpretive centre, constructed by the Government of Alberta received 114 000 visitors from May 198~ to December 198~. Built directly into the hillside, the centre houses a viewpoint, artifacts and displays which interpret the site, documenting the buffalo hunting culture of the plains people from ancient times to the arrival of the Europeans. A gift shop and a cafeteria which includes buffalo meat as part of its menu are also a part of the facility.

The site is relatively isolated and there are no support services such as accommodation or restaurants in close proximity. The Peigan Indians who are very active in daily operation of the centre, have a reserve (population 2 214) adjacent to the site. In the past several years the Peigans have expressed an interest in developing a resort on their reserve which would include

accommodation and recreation and cultural programs.

Observations

The Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre is one of Alberta's world-class facilities and attractions. It is exciting, well presented and exhibits authentic historic drama.

As visitors approach the interpretive centre from the east, the first image they receive places the actual facility in the background against the bluff, with an overflow RV parking lot and cattle fencing in the foreground. The parking lot is very poorly located and interferes significantly with the overall visual impact of the centre.

The interpretive centre is built into the side of the bluff, and visitors enter from the foot of the building. Once inside the centre, visitors are asked to start their tour of the facility from the top of the building. Because of the maze of elevators and stairs required to reach the top of the building, visitors often feel confused and bewildered before they begin to experience the contents of the facility.

From the top of the building, visitors can walk out onto a viewing platform at the top of the bluff where buffalo were driven over the edge by Indians. A Native interpreter explains the events leading up to, and following, the buffalo jump. The view from the platform is panoramic but not exciting. There are no telltale signs of the activity which occurred below after a successful hunt, such as the temporary village which housed the Indian bands who processed the many tons of buffalo meat.

As visitors gaze out onto the plains below, instead of being able to imagine the scene after the hunt, they see the RV overflow parking lot. This intrudes as an offensive visual anomaly. For these reasons, as well as the fact that the events leading up to a buffalo jump are completely foreign to most visitors, it is very difficult to imagine exactly what the interpreter is trying to describe. Similarly, looking back over the plains above the bluff, there is no evidence of the driving lanes built by the Natives to stampede buffalo over the jump.

Inside the facility most visitors are left to examine the exhibit on each level of the interpretive centre at their leisure. Native interpreters are available and they provide a very proud and dignified account of the events surrounding the buffalo jump as they relate to their culture.

The physical displays are extremely well done, but because of the design of the building, traffic flow through the complex and around certain static displays is generally very poor, resulting in visitor congestion. The congestion is particularly evident when the interpreters are giving presentations at a specific display. With its growing popularity as a unique visitor destination in Alberta, the interpretive centre is already too small to handle the volume of traffic projected for the next several years.

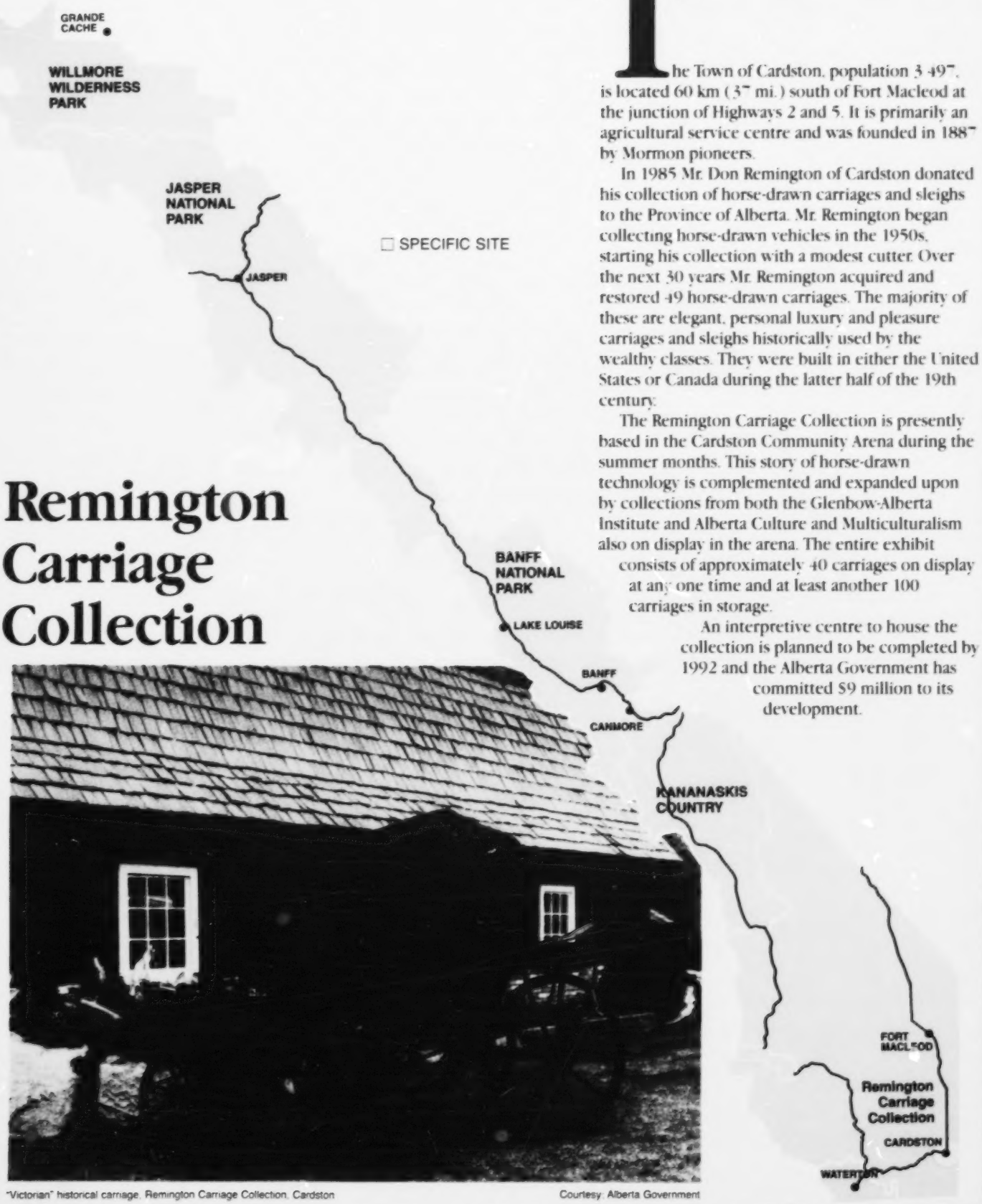
At the end of the interpretive displays, visitors are able to see an excellent educational short film which re-enacts the entire buffalo jump event.

The gift shop, located in the main lobby of the centre, is good but the items for sale are predictable and the shop is much too crowded.

Recommendations

1. A large part of the impression of the facility and the events which transpired at the site is visual. The RV overflow parking lot and fencing must be moved from the front of the facility. Other less obtrusive options than cattle fencing should be sought.
2. Planning should start immediately for an expansion of the facility to accommodate an increase in visitor traffic. In addition to planning expansion, it is very important that guests are given an opportunity to be psychologically transported back into the era of the jump, before they experience the interpretation. The movie is an excellent way to achieve this preparation and should be made available for all guests to view as they enter the facility, rather than when they depart.
3. Interpreters should wear more authentic costumes than blue jeans and cowboy hats. Costumes should have more of a traditional Native flavour. Inappropriate modern clothing should be avoided.
4. The life and history of the Peigan Indian Band could be better interpreted if there was a greater profile both in the facility and as a part of the surrounding landscape (i.e., recreate the original hunting and buffalo processing camp).
5. The scenic vista around the site, as far as the horizon, must be maintained in order to preserve the historic integrity of the facility. Under no circumstances should other amenities (commercial or otherwise) ever be permitted within viewing distance of the top of the bluff.
6. Buffalo driving lanes should be constructed at the top of the bluff, as they would have originally appeared, so that visitors can gain a better appreciation of the magnitude of the events which occurred at the site.
7. The interpretive facility is intended to provide an educational experience and should never be altered to focus on entertainment rather than education.
8. More hand-made Native arts and crafts are required to allow the gift shop to complement the interpretive experience of Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump.

Remington Carriage Collection



"Victorian" historical carriage, Remington Carriage Collection, Cardston

Courtesy: Alberta Government

The Town of Cardston, population 3 497, is located 60 km (37 mi.) south of Fort Macleod at the junction of Highways 2 and 5. It is primarily an agricultural service centre and was founded in 1887 by Mormon pioneers.

In 1985 Mr. Don Remington of Cardston donated his collection of horse-drawn carriages and sleighs to the Province of Alberta. Mr. Remington began collecting horse-drawn vehicles in the 1950s, starting his collection with a modest cutter. Over the next 30 years Mr. Remington acquired and restored 49 horse-drawn carriages. The majority of these are elegant, personal luxury and pleasure carriages and sleighs historically used by the wealthy classes. They were built in either the United States or Canada during the latter half of the 19th century.

The Remington Carriage Collection is presently based in the Cardston Community Arena during the summer months. This story of horse-drawn technology is complemented and expanded upon by collections from both the Glenbow-Alberta Institute and Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism also on display in the arena. The entire exhibit consists of approximately 40 carriages on display at any one time and at least another 100 carriages in storage.

An interpretive centre to house the collection is planned to be completed by 1992 and the Alberta Government has committed $9 million to its development.

Observations

Visitors to the arena can request a tour of the collection from staff interpreters at the arena. The collection itself is composed only of carriages and does not include related articles such as horse harnesses or driver livery. Much more could be done with the Remington Carriage Collection by adding a more human element. Although there is an excellent tour, with a very knowledgeable interpreter, the collection is very static and has potential to be far more exciting. Apart from a cloth jacket patch, there are no mementos or souvenirs of the collection which can be purchased by visitors.

The Remington Carriage Collection has potential to be a fascinating museum exhibit and a unique drawing card for the community of Cardston. From the proposed new site and facility plans it is apparent that the new site will not be sufficiently large to allow the interpretive centre to be developed into a world-class attraction. Adjacent lands may be available and could be set aside for activities designed to enhance the visitor experience. The interpretive centre should not be squeezed into a site simply because of the size restrictions of donated land. It should be located on an ample and gracious site. This would allow the museum to avoid a static image by providing room for rides and parades.

The romance of the era of horse-drawn transportation is intrinsically appealing and reminds us of a simpler, more peaceful, less hurried time. The interpretive centre could become much more than a museum for Mr. Remington's collection. It should be designed as a training centre and workshop attractive to museums and carriage collectors across North America. The art of building and repairing carriages could be preserved through this training centre. Such a centre could also generate revenue for the museum and the community.

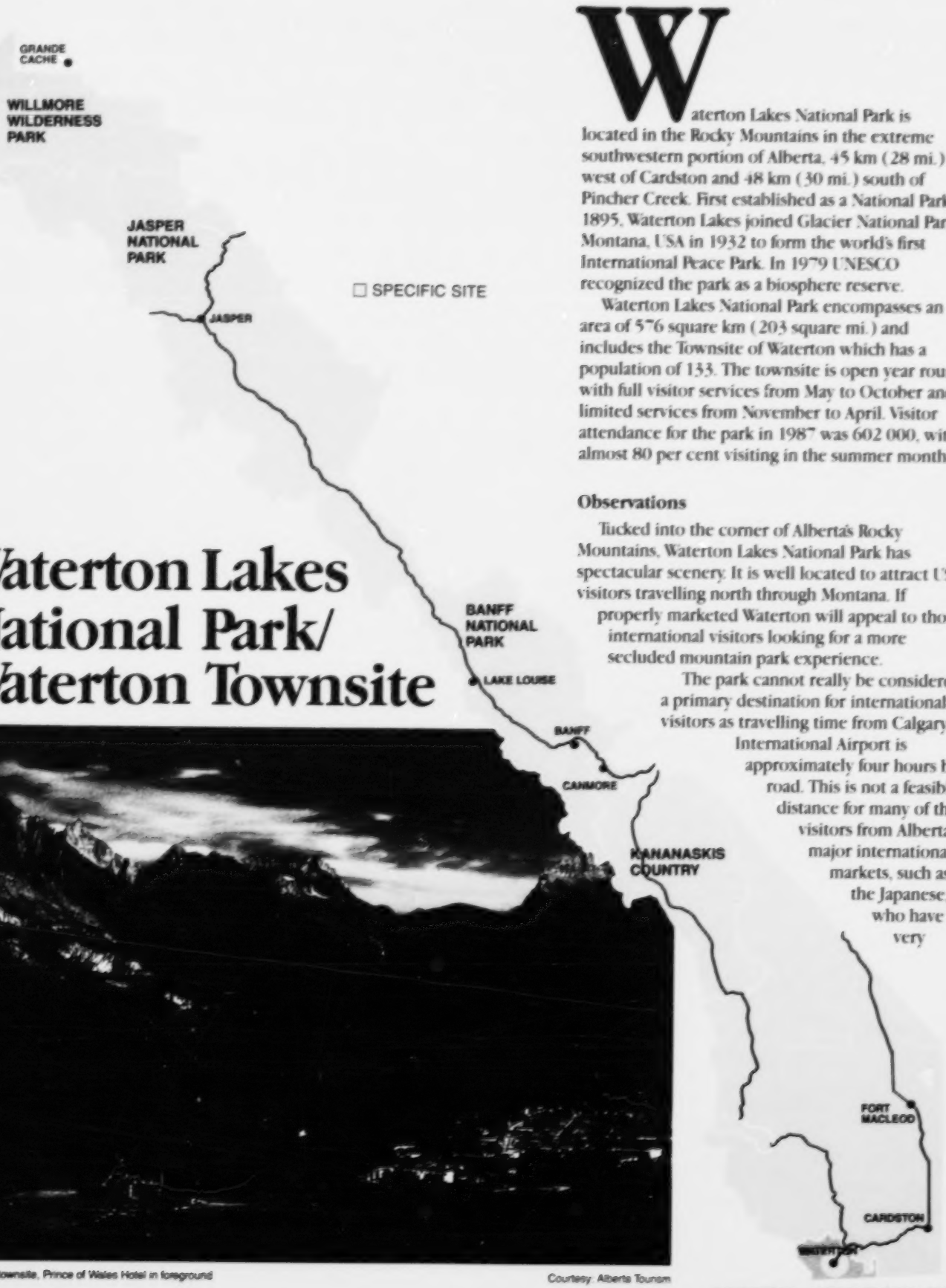
Recommendations

1. No mention of Mr. Remington was made in the presentation by the interpreter. The story of his many years of collecting and personal restoration of carriages must be told in order to add a critical human element to the interpretation. The full name "Remington Carriage Collection" must remain.
2. The display must come to life. It must have live horses, horse harnesses and driver livery on display to the public. Models of horses could be set up inside to create a more complete feeling of what a horse and carriage looked like. Interpreters should be dressed either in period costume, or in driver livery. A tack and harness building should be open to the public.
3. There is an excellent opportunity to have experts do actual restoration work on site with facilities for public viewing. A training centre should be part of the new interpretive facility. A vocational program could be established for those individuals wishing to apprentice to this type of work. In addition, the workshop should undertake the highly specialized custom restoration and repair work that is required by museums and private collectors across North America.
4. Working carriages must be on display so that visitors can have the opportunity to hear the noises associated with a horse and carriage (harnesses, bells and horse hooves). Visitors should also have the opportunity to take a carriage ride.
5. A gift shop which sells scale model horses and buggies, bells, replica carriages, etc. is required.
6. Adjacent lands must be acquired to allow the facility to expand to meet the grandeur and high quality expected in a world-class facility. The current site, without the use of adjacent lands, appears to have severe limitations for expansion.

Waterton Lakes National Park/ Waterton Townsite

Waterton townsite, Prince of Wales Hotel in foreground

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

Waterton Lakes National Park is located in the Rocky Mountains in the extreme southwestern portion of Alberta, 45 km (28 mi.) west of Cardston and 48 km (30 mi.) south of Pincher Creek. First established as a National Park in 1895, Waterton Lakes joined Glacier National Park in Montana, USA in 1932 to form the world's first International Peace Park. In 1979 UNESCO recognized the park as a biosphere reserve.

Waterton Lakes National Park encompasses an area of 576 square km (203 square mi.) and includes the Townsite of Waterton which has a population of 133. The townsite is open year round, with full visitor services from May to October and limited services from November to April. Visitor attendance for the park in 1987 was 602 000, with almost 80 per cent visiting in the summer months.

Observations

Tucked into the corner of Alberta's Rocky Mountains, Waterton Lakes National Park has spectacular scenery. It is well located to attract US visitors travelling north through Montana. If properly marketed Waterton will appeal to those international visitors looking for a more secluded mountain park experience.

The park cannot really be considered a primary destination for international visitors as travelling time from Calgary International Airport is approximately four hours by road. This is not a feasible distance for many of the visitors from Alberta's major international markets, such as the Japanese, who have a very

limited amount of time for travel in the province.

As visitors approach the Townsite of Waterton, the Prince of Wales Hotel provides a most spectacular landmark. Constructed in 1927 on the bluff at the end of Waterton Lake, this grand hotel has a significant amount of international appeal. Unfortunately, the hotel has not kept up to standards expected of a world-class facility. To relieve the crowding and to permit a more spacious and elegant visitor experience, additional wings could easily be constructed on each side of the building without ruining the appeal of the hotel. This would also provide the larger volume of rooms needed to attract the international market. The extra space would allow for a more defined division between the day-use visitors and hotel guests. The hotel grounds are in need of landscaping to help it fit more gracefully into the surrounding scenic landscape.

Waterton townsite has a small-town charm which must be maintained in order to preserve the International Peace Park theme. However, within mandatory development restrictions required to enhance this intimate and quaint community, there are opportunities to expand to meet current and future visitor needs. Infilling of lots and restoration of the original buildings to provide additional visitor rooms must be a priority. In addition, the townsite campground is located on prime developable land and should be considered for redevelopment into tasteful, architecturally controlled, fixed-roof accommodation.

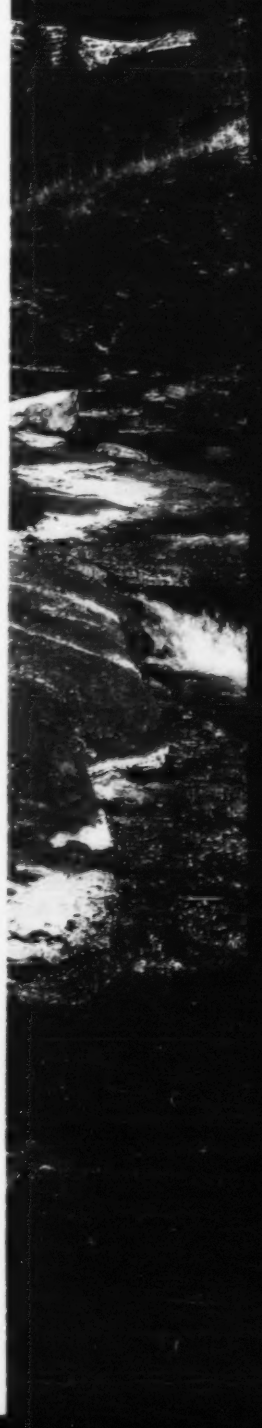
A distinction can be made between the markets for the Prince of Wales Hotel, a more upmarket international attraction, and the Waterton Townsite, a quaint, peaceful, nature oriented mountain holiday resort. Park administrators should develop and market these two sites separately.

Currently, the summer season seems to be filled to capacity, unlike the spring and fall shoulder seasons and the very slow winter season. The latter seasons could be more actively marketed to provincial markets. As an example, the mountain experience at Christmas/New Years could be very popular with those Albertans currently visiting in the summer.

Parks Canada has not done an adequate job of planning and administering the Waterton Townsite as a focus for visitors to the National Park. Serious consideration must be given to planning Waterton to permit some growth with conservation of the town atmosphere as a priority. It is critical that over-commercialization is prevented so that Waterton never becomes another commercial area like Banff.

Recommendations

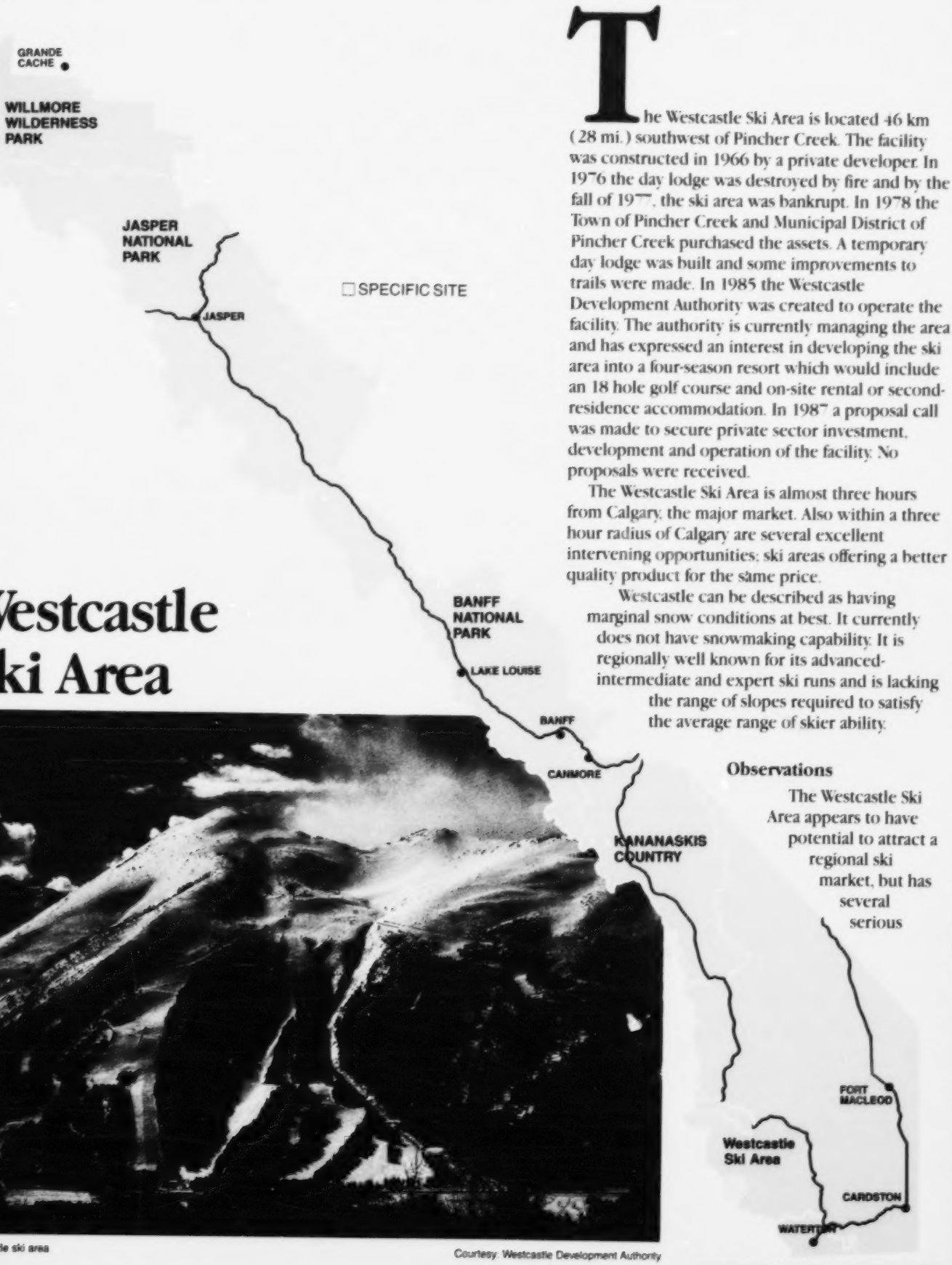
1. Waterton townsite should develop a soundly based municipal plan that includes an overall management strategy for the future. The strategy should outline allowable development, future expansion areas, municipal zoning, policies on lot infilling, architectural controls and other municipal concerns. The plan should also address such issues as the proportion of permanent residences to visitor accommodation in the park.
2. New accommodation must be made available in the townsite in order to attract additional visitors. Additional sites, such as the townsite campground, should be considered for new accommodation development.
3. Townsite restoration is required and should include lot infilling and building restoration and upgrading.
4. The Prince of Wales Hotel must be totally upgraded and expanded with new accommodation in order to satisfy the international marketplace.
5. The hotel and the townsite should be promoted as separate attractions to separate markets.
6. New ways of promoting Waterton Lakes National Park must be considered to increase and extend shoulder season visits.
7. Waterton Lakes National Park should be marketed as one of the four major attractions in the southwest part of the Province; the other three being Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre, the Remington Carriage Collection, and the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. Waterton should never be promoted as accommodation for the Westcastle Ski area or as Alberta's windsurfing heaven, since these impressions do not fit within the marketable image of an International Peace Park.



Westcastle Ski Area

Westcastle ski area

Courtesy: Westcastle Development Authority



The Westcastle Ski Area is located 46 km (28 mi.) southwest of Pincher Creek. The facility was constructed in 1966 by a private developer. In 1976 the day lodge was destroyed by fire and by the fall of 1977, the ski area was bankrupt. In 1978 the Town of Pincher Creek and Municipal District of Pincher Creek purchased the assets. A temporary day lodge was built and some improvements to trails were made. In 1985 the Westcastle Development Authority was created to operate the facility. The authority is currently managing the area and has expressed an interest in developing the ski area into a four-season resort which would include an 18 hole golf course and on-site rental or second-residence accommodation. In 1987 a proposal call was made to secure private sector investment, development and operation of the facility. No proposals were received.

The Westcastle Ski Area is almost three hours from Calgary, the major market. Also within a three hour radius of Calgary are several excellent intervening opportunities; ski areas offering a better quality product for the same price.

Westcastle can be described as having marginal snow conditions at best. It currently does not have snowmaking capability. It is regionally well known for its advanced-intermediate and expert ski runs and is lacking the range of slopes required to satisfy the average range of skier ability.

Observations

The Westcastle Ski Area appears to have potential to attract a regional ski market, but has several serious

limitations associated with the site which will prevent the area from becoming an international or even a provincial ski area. The most critical of these limitations include distance to market, snow conditions and variety of skiing terrain.

Additional drawbacks to the site include the very limited and confined space available for development of new facilities in the base area and the lack of visual grandeur.

The addition of on-site accommodation would be a significant advantage, as the ability to develop on-site accommodation is currently limited or non-existent at other ski areas in Alberta. Good or excellent golf and ski facilities must be in place before any condominiums will sell at that location. However, the fact that no proposals were received in response to the 1987 proposal call is probably indicative of private sector recognition of the limitations inherent in the Westcastle site.

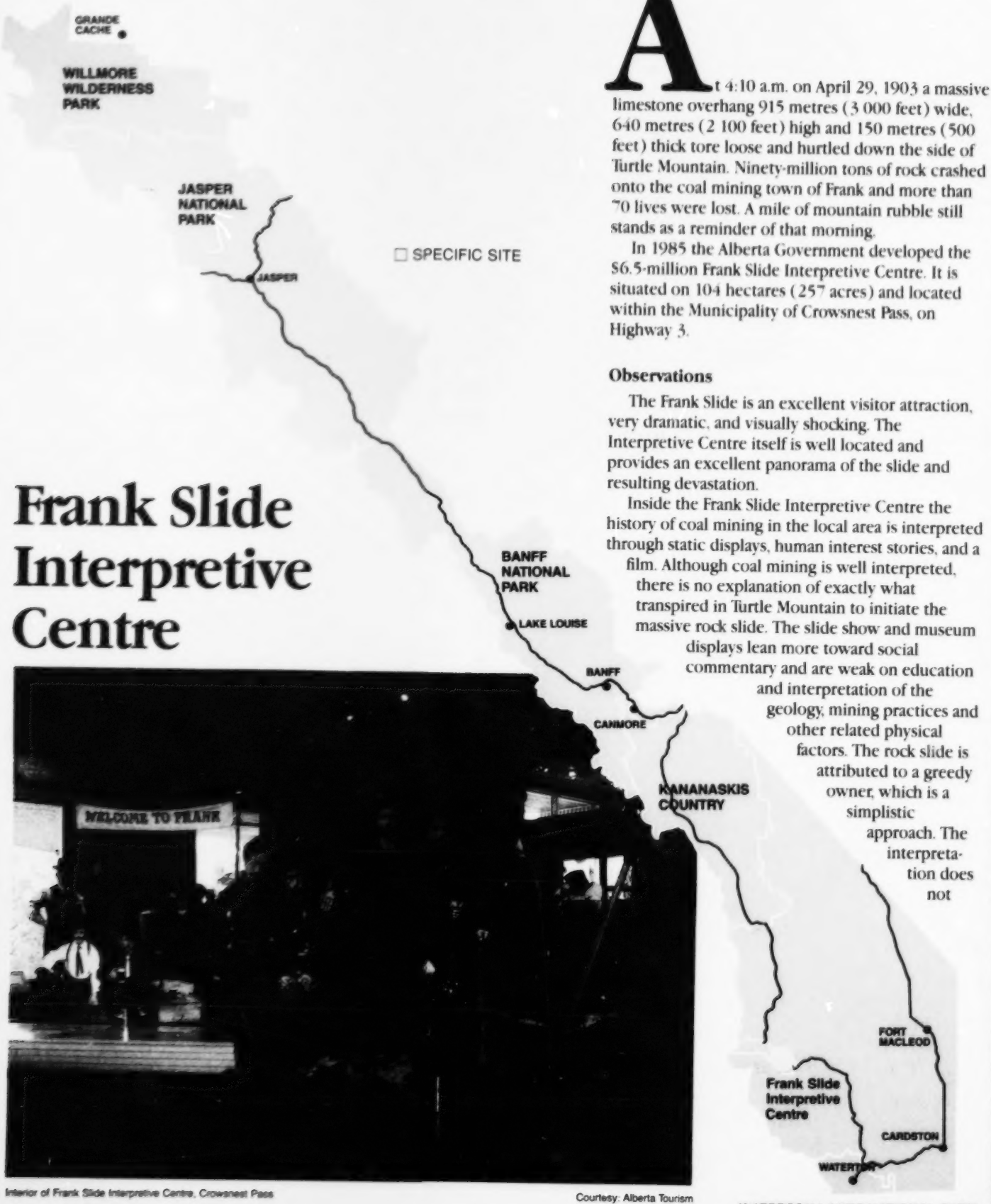
Recommendations

1. The Westcastle Ski Area should be left to mature as a regional recreation opportunity, not pushed into trying to become a major provincial tourism facility. Any funding or assistance from the Government of Alberta should take this into consideration.
2. If the Government of Alberta wishes to provide funding to the Westcastle Ski Area, it should be used to improve the road, sewage disposal and water systems and to assist with development of a masterplan for the four-season resort complex. Funding should not be provided to do actual development of facilities on-site. Once infrastructure has been provided, the private sector should be relied upon to finance development of the ski area expansion, golf course and on-site accommodation.

Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

Interior of Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, Crowsnest Pass

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



At 4:10 a.m. on April 29, 1903 a massive limestone overhang 915 metres (3 000 feet) wide, 640 metres (2 100 feet) high and 150 metres (500 feet) thick tore loose and hurtled down the side of Turtle Mountain. Ninety-million tons of rock crashed onto the coal mining town of Frank and more than 70 lives were lost. A mile of mountain rubble still stands as a reminder of that morning.

In 1985 the Alberta Government developed the $6.5-million Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. It is situated on 104 hectares (257 acres) and located within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, on Highway 3.

Observations

The Frank Slide is an excellent visitor attraction, very dramatic, and visually shocking. The Interpretive Centre itself is well located and provides an excellent panorama of the slide and resulting devastation.

Inside the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre the history of coal mining in the local area is interpreted through static displays, human interest stories, and a film. Although coal mining is well interpreted, there is no explanation of exactly what transpired in Turtle Mountain to initiate the massive rock slide. The slide show and museum displays lean more toward social commentary and are weak on education and interpretation of the geology, mining practices and other related physical factors. The rock slide is attributed to a greedy owner, which is a simplistic approach. The interpretation does not

capture the tempo of the times; the hard rolling energy required to build the west and the immigrants who gladly worked as poorly paid labourers when the alternative was staying in Europe. Visitors come away from the interpretive centre still wondering about the Frank Slide, what caused it and other details about the actual event.

The gift shop, located at the entrance to the facility, is much too small and does not offer gifts which would be an authentic reminder of the visitor's experience at the site. Because of its small size many visitors are probably avoiding the area and an expansion will almost certainly realize larger revenues.

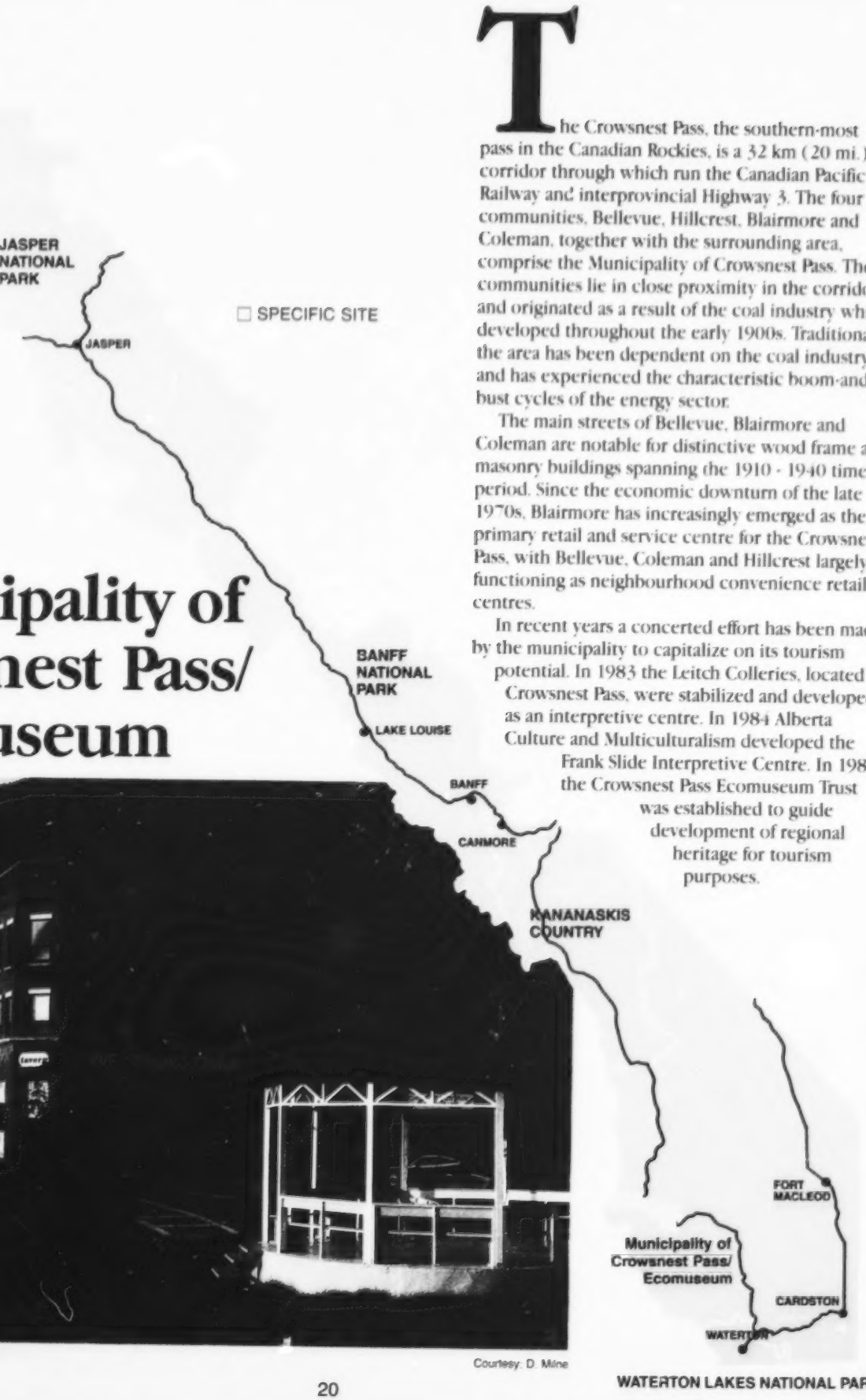
Recommendations

1. The Interpretive Centre must focus more clearly on interpreting the event of the Frank Slide. Visitors are fascinated by disaster and tragedy and this element of the story must be recreated in detail in order to satisfy their curiosity.
2. The gift shop should be expanded as soon as possible to accommodate a much larger volume of traffic.
3. Living museums are difficult to create and this one falls short in several areas, most importantly in trying to capture the era of the first decade of the century and the story surrounding the site. Several of the displays should be reworked to reduce the text and to clarify the story.
4. Souvenirs are items which visitors purchase in order to remind them of a holiday or a particular site. The items should have an authenticity which relates, in this case, to the Frank Slide and coal mining. Several examples of items which could be made available through the gift shop include; full size replica coal miner's hats, replica coal lanterns, actual lumps of coal and full colour posters of an aerial view of the Frank Slide.

The Municipality of Crowsnest Pass/ Ecomuseum

Historic streetscape, Crowsnest Pass

Courtesy: D. Milne



The Crowsnest Pass, the southern-most pass in the Canadian Rockies, is a 32 km (20 mi.) corridor through which run the Canadian Pacific Railway and interprovincial Highway 3. The four communities, Bellevue, Hillcrest, Blairmore and Coleman, together with the surrounding area, comprise the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass. The communities lie in close proximity in the corridor and originated as a result of the coal industry which developed throughout the early 1900s. Traditionally, the area has been dependent on the coal industry and has experienced the characteristic boom-and-bust cycles of the energy sector.

The main streets of Bellevue, Blairmore and Coleman are notable for distinctive wood frame and masonry buildings spanning the 1910 - 1940 time period. Since the economic downturn of the late 1970s, Blairmore has increasingly emerged as the primary retail and service centre for the Crowsnest Pass, with Bellevue, Coleman and Hillcrest largely functioning as neighbourhood convenience retail centres.

In recent years a concerted effort has been made by the municipality to capitalize on its tourism potential. In 1983 the Leitch Collieries, located in Crowsnest Pass, were stabilized and developed as an interpretive centre. In 1984 Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism developed the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. In 1986 the Crowsnest Pass Ecomuseum Trust was established to guide development of regional heritage for tourism purposes.

The community has proposed that a living museum or ecomuseum be developed around the coal mining history of the municipality.

Observations

In driving through these communities, it is obvious that they are considered mere travel stops by visitors to the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre or travellers using the highway between Alberta and British Columbia. In order to entice visitors into the communities, there has to be a unique type of attraction. Assuming the history of coal mining has been adequately interpreted at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, there are many other opportunities which the communities can seize without resorting to yet another museum. A good example is the remarkable ethnic diversity which exists in the pass as a result of immigrant mine workers. The variety of cultures and their history in the pass can be displayed to visitors at the many services which visitors use, such as restaurants. The Crowsnest Pass could become known not only for the Frank Slide and the interpretive centre, but also as a unique location in the Province for sampling the finest in ethnic cuisine.

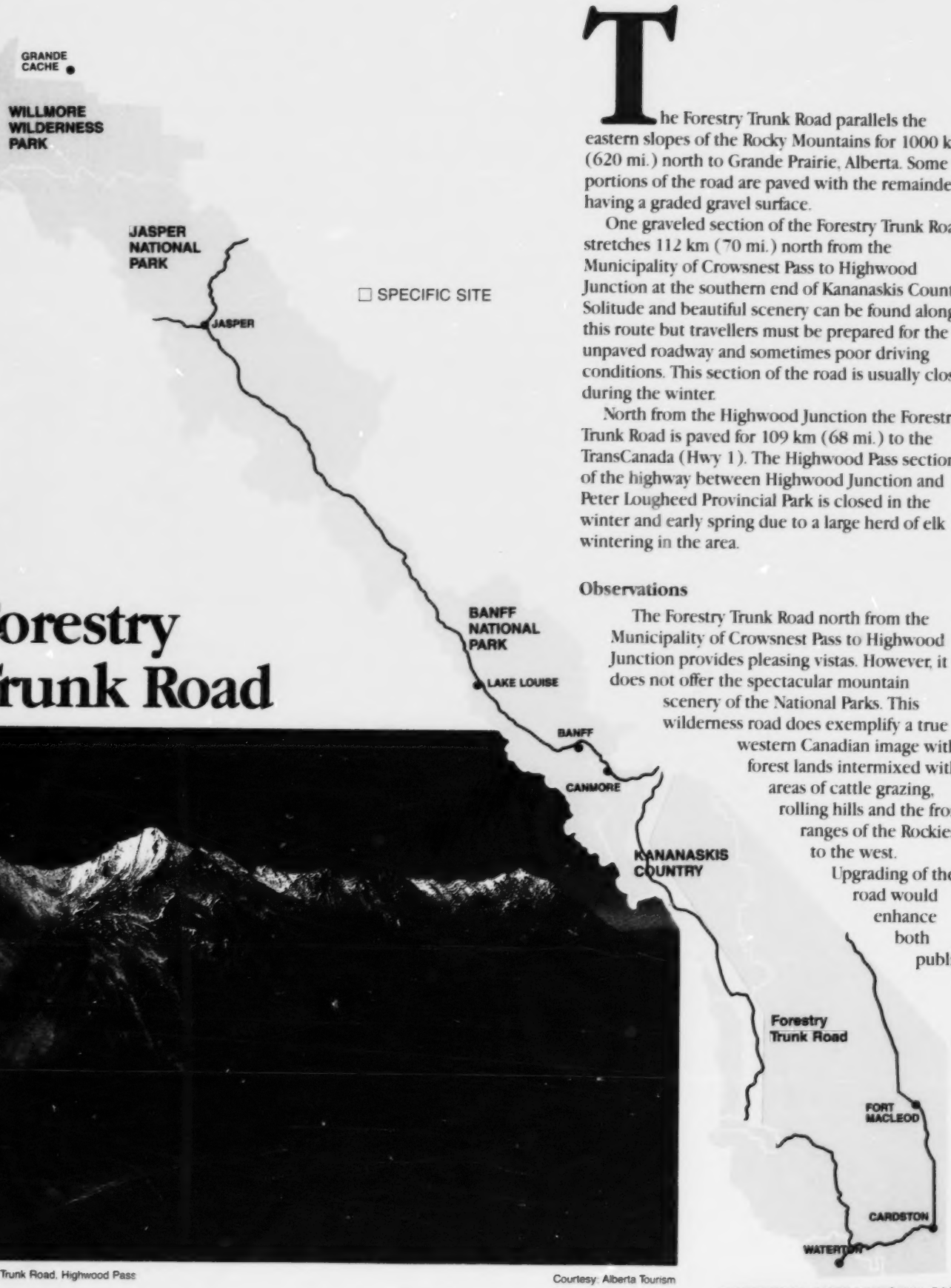
Recommendations

1. In developing the ecomuseum, communities in the Crowsnest Pass should be very careful not to overexpose visitors to coal mining and museums.
2. The Crowsnest Pass should take advantage of the potential of interpreting the variety of ethnic groups present in the municipality through visitor services such as restaurants and themed shops.

Forestry Trunk Road

Forestry Trunk Road, Highwood Pass

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



The Forestry Trunk Road parallels the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains for 1000 km (620 mi.) north to Grande Prairie, Alberta. Some portions of the road are paved with the remainder having a graded gravel surface.

One graveled section of the Forestry Trunk Road stretches 112 km (70 mi.) north from the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass to Highwood Junction at the southern end of Kananaskis Country. Solitude and beautiful scenery can be found along this route but travellers must be prepared for the unpaved roadway and sometimes poor driving conditions. This section of the road is usually closed during the winter.

North from the Highwood Junction the Forestry Trunk Road is paved for 109 km (68 mi.) to the TransCanada (Hwy 1). The Highwood Pass section of the highway between Highwood Junction and Peter Lougheed Provincial Park is closed in the winter and early spring due to a large herd of elk wintering in the area.

Observations

The Forestry Trunk Road north from the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass to Highwood Junction provides pleasing vistas. However, it does not offer the spectacular mountain scenery of the National Parks. This wilderness road does exemplify a true western Canadian image with forest lands intermixed with areas of cattle grazing, rolling hills and the front ranges of the Rockies to the west.

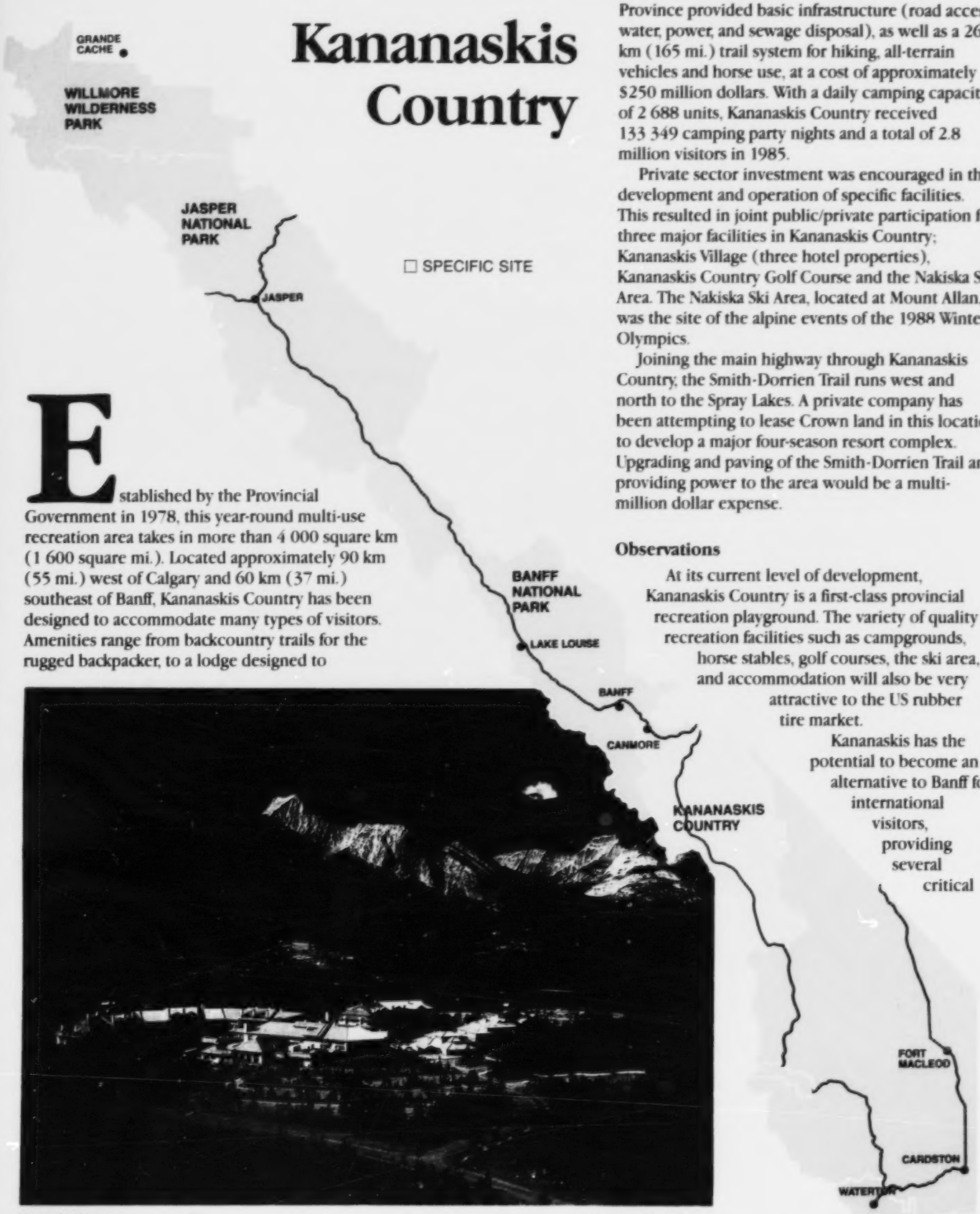
Upgrading of the road would enhance both public

and private sector tourism opportunities along the route as it would provide an important tourism link between the Waterton-Crowsnest Pass region and the Kananaskis-Banff region. Upgrading of the road to year-round use could, however, put pressure on the Alberta Government to keep the Highwood Pass open throughout the year and possibly endanger wildlife in the area.

Recommendations

1. The Forestry Trunk Road between the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass and the Highwood Junction should be upgraded to all-weather standards for traveller safety. This is important to the overall development of the tourism industry in southwestern Alberta.
2. If the road is to be paved there will be pressure to leave it open year-round including the Highwood Pass. The wildlife concerns in this area must be carefully considered before a decision is made in this regard.

Kananaskis Country



Established by the Provincial Government in 1978, this year-round multi-use recreation area takes in more than 4 000 square km (1 600 square mi.). Located approximately 90 km (55 mi.) west of Calgary and 60 km (37 mi.) southeast of Banff, Kananaskis Country has been designed to accommodate many types of visitors. Amenities range from backcountry trails for the rugged backpacker, to a lodge designed to accommodate the disabled and seniors. The Province provided basic infrastructure (road access, water, power, and sewage disposal), as well as a 265 km (165 mi.) trail system for hiking, all-terrain vehicles and horse use, at a cost of approximately $250 million dollars. With a daily camping capacity of 2 688 units, Kananaskis Country received 133 349 camping party nights and a total of 2.8 million visitors in 1985.

Private sector investment was encouraged in the development and operation of specific facilities. This resulted in joint public/private participation for three major facilities in Kananaskis Country; Kananaskis Village (three hotel properties), Kananaskis Country Golf Course and the Nakiska Ski Area. The Nakiska Ski Area, located at Mount Allan, was the site of the alpine events of the 1988 Winter Olympics.

Joining the main highway through Kananaskis Country, the Smith-Dorrien Trail runs west and north to the Spray Lakes. A private company has been attempting to lease Crown land in this location to develop a major four-season resort complex. Upgrading and paving of the Smith-Dorrien Trail and providing power to the area would be a multi-million dollar expense.

Observations

At its current level of development, Kananaskis Country is a first-class provincial recreation playground. The variety of quality recreation facilities such as campgrounds, horse stables, golf courses, the ski area, and accommodation will also be very attractive to the US rubber tire market.

Kananaskis has the potential to become an alternative to Banff for international visitors, providing several critical

Kananaskis Village

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

changes are made. The area is almost too clean, too sterile, lacking in density of visitor servicing and lacking in grandeur. To accommodate the international visitor, a central focus of social activity, including shopping and evening entertainment, must be provided close to and preferably within walking distance of Kananaskis Village. As well, the three major developments (hotel properties, ski area, and golf course) are not close enough to one another to convey the feeling of a mountain retreat or alpine village to visitors. Without this central activity node the potential to draw and hold international visitors to Kananaskis Country is limited.

The Hotel Kananaskis, specifically, is both luxurious and elegant, offering the best of service and amenities. However the property designers have not taken advantage of the environment surrounding the hotel. For example, although there could be a view of the mountains from the dining room, visitors cannot enjoy it as none of the trees have been removed from in front of the picture windows. Similarly, because of the distance from the hotel properties to the golf course (3 km/2 mi.) it is not possible for guests to watch the game from their hotel.

The 36-hole world-class Kananaskis Golf Course contains some of the finest golfing facilities and services in Canada. For a facility of this calibre, the green fees are much too low, and could be increased substantially without impacting the avid national and international golfing visitor. Increasing green fees may, however, have a significant negative impact on the largely Albertan golfing population which currently plays the course. Tee-off times are already booked months in advance by Alberta residents and visitors to the province. Problems have already arisen as many hotel guests cannot access tee-off times on the course.

The Nakiska Ski Area is a superb, high quality ski facility in a good market location. The ski area will need three to five years operation time before it begins to fill its niche in the provincial and national ski market. If the facility is ever expanded, the potential of developing a ski-out run to the hotel properties should be considered in conjunction with a series of T-bars to transport skiing guests from the hotels to the base of the ski area, a distance of two kilometers (1 mi.).

In the area surrounding the three main developments there are a variety of other visitor opportunities that combine to make Kananaskis Country a unique, upscale provincial playground. There are also opportunities to develop additional visitor services and facilities to enhance the appeal of Kananaskis to all visitors. Additional fixed-roof accommodation similar to Mount Engadine Lodge, which offers backcountry European style accommodation, would be the most appropriate form of accommodation development for Kananaskis for the foreseeable future.

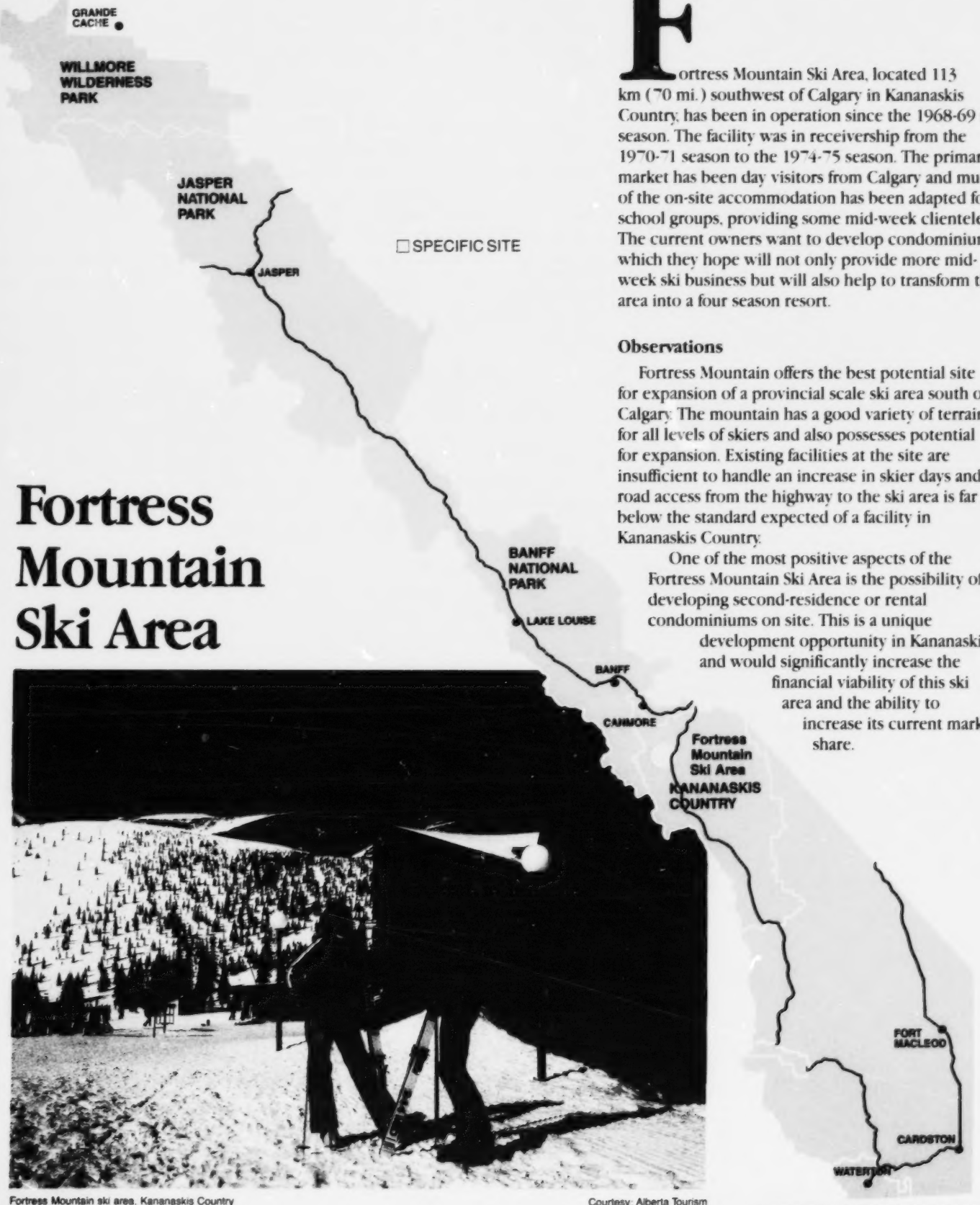
The Spray Lakes area has good potential for development, primarily because of the presence of a reasonably sized body of water. But considering the current oversupply of rooms in the three new hotel properties, development of a major resort at Spray Lakes may be premature.

The main highway into Kananaskis offers travellers an excellent opportunity to view this majestic foothill and mountain region of Alberta. The alternative Smith-Dorrien Trail is a high standard all-weather gravel road and does not require upgrading.

Recommendations

1. A decision must be made as to the future market for Kananaskis. Is it a provincial recreation area or a world-class resort? As is obvious by the conflicts arising over the use of the golf course, the two markets do not always mix.
2. In order to compete with Banff for the international visitor, Kananaskis Country will require a social focus of shopping and evening entertainment. Without it, the potential for Kananaskis to attract visitors from Banff is severely limited. In addition to and perhaps more important than a social focus, the village must reflect the style, graciousness and grandeur that the international traveller has come to expect of Banff.
3. During the design stage of any new facility, every attempt should be made to showcase Alberta's mountain scenery.
4. Future expansion of either the Kananaskis Country Golf Course or the Nakiska Ski Area must be designed to better link those developments with the Kananaskis Village hotel properties.
5. Smaller, more intimate backcountry accommodation, such as Mount Engadine Lodge, should be the type of development to consider if additional fixed roof accommodation is required to expand on the provincial and US rubber tire market.
6. Preliminary indications are that the high quality hotel market is not currently using the facilities available at Kananaskis for a number of reasons mentioned above. Careful consideration should be given to these problems prior to approving another major development such as Spray Lakes.
7. The Smith-Dorrien Trail should not be upgraded, as this will not improve the attractiveness of Kananaskis Country to visitors.
8. Until Kananaskis Country has a number of the developments outlined above, it should only be promoted to provincial markets as a high quality provincial recreation area.

Fortress Mountain Ski Area



Fortress Mountain ski area, Kananaskis Country

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Fortress Mountain Ski Area, located 113 km (70 mi.) southwest of Calgary in Kananaskis Country, has been in operation since the 1968-69 ski season. The facility was in receivership from the 1970-71 season to the 1974-75 season. The primary market has been day visitors from Calgary and much of the on-site accommodation has been adapted for school groups, providing some mid-week clientele. The current owners want to develop condominiums which they hope will not only provide more mid-week ski business but will also help to transform the area into a four season resort.

Observations

Fortress Mountain offers the best potential site for expansion of a provincial scale ski area south of Calgary. The mountain has a good variety of terrain for all levels of skiers and also possesses potential for expansion. Existing facilities at the site are insufficient to handle an increase in skier days and road access from the highway to the ski area is far below the standard expected of a facility in Kananaskis Country.

One of the most positive aspects of the Fortress Mountain Ski Area is the possibility of developing second-residence or rental condominiums on site. This is a unique development opportunity in Kananaskis and would significantly increase the financial viability of this ski area and the ability to increase its current market share.

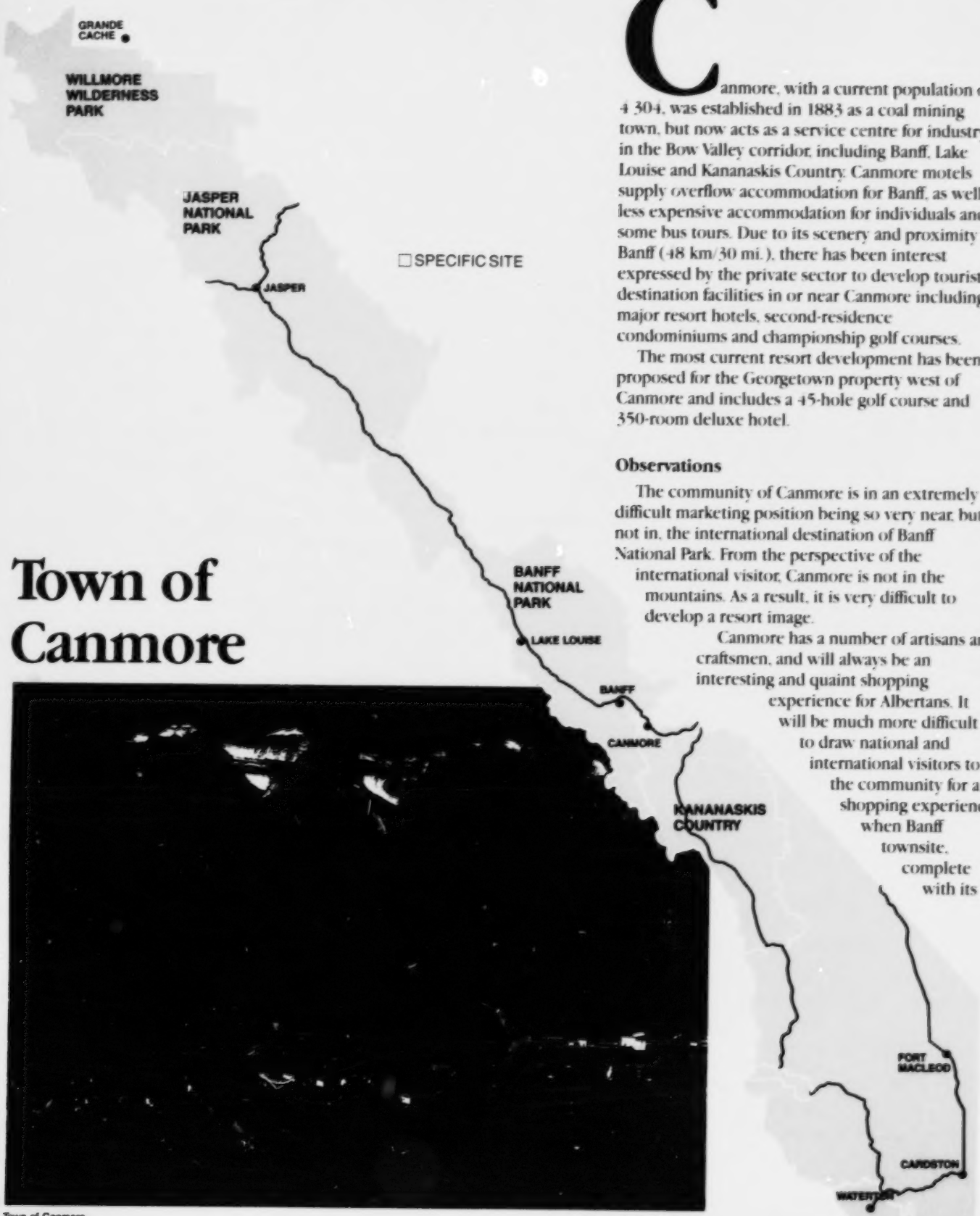
Recommendations

1. Serious consideration should be given to the construction of new base facilities in order to accommodate both current and future visitor levels.
2. Road access from the highway to the ski area must be upgraded to a level equivalent to other developments in Kananaskis Country for both safety and aesthetic reasons. The Alberta Government should take responsibility for the upgrading as it has done with all other major recreation developments in Kananaskis Country. During upgrading roadside pull-offs should be created for viewing and photography.
3. Any proposal for expansion of the existing ski facility including ski runs, snowmaking equipment, base area facilities and condominium development should be supported by the Government of Alberta.
4. Alberta Tourism should become actively involved in assisting Fortress Mountain to develop resort condominiums for rental or second-residence purposes.
5. The area has beautiful scenery and potential to attract visitors in the summer months. However, serious cleanup, landscaping and general beautification are required to make the area appealing in the summer.

Town of Canmore

Town of Canmore

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

Canmore, with a current population of 4 304, was established in 1883 as a coal mining town, but now acts as a service centre for industry in the Bow Valley corridor, including Banff, Lake Louise and Kananaskis Country. Canmore motels supply overflow accommodation for Banff, as well as less expensive accommodation for individuals and some bus tours. Due to its scenery and proximity to Banff (48 km/30 mi.), there has been interest expressed by the private sector to develop tourist destination facilities in or near Canmore including: major resort hotels, second-residence condominiums and championship golf courses.

The most current resort development has been proposed for the Georgetown property west of Canmore and includes a 45-hole golf course and 350-room deluxe hotel.

Observations

The community of Canmore is in an extremely difficult marketing position being so very near, but not in, the international destination of Banff National Park. From the perspective of the international visitor, Canmore is not in the mountains. As a result, it is very difficult to develop a resort image.

Canmore has a number of artisans and craftsmen, and will always be an interesting and quaint shopping experience for Albertans. It will be much more difficult to draw national and international visitors to the community for a shopping experience when Banff townsite, complete with its

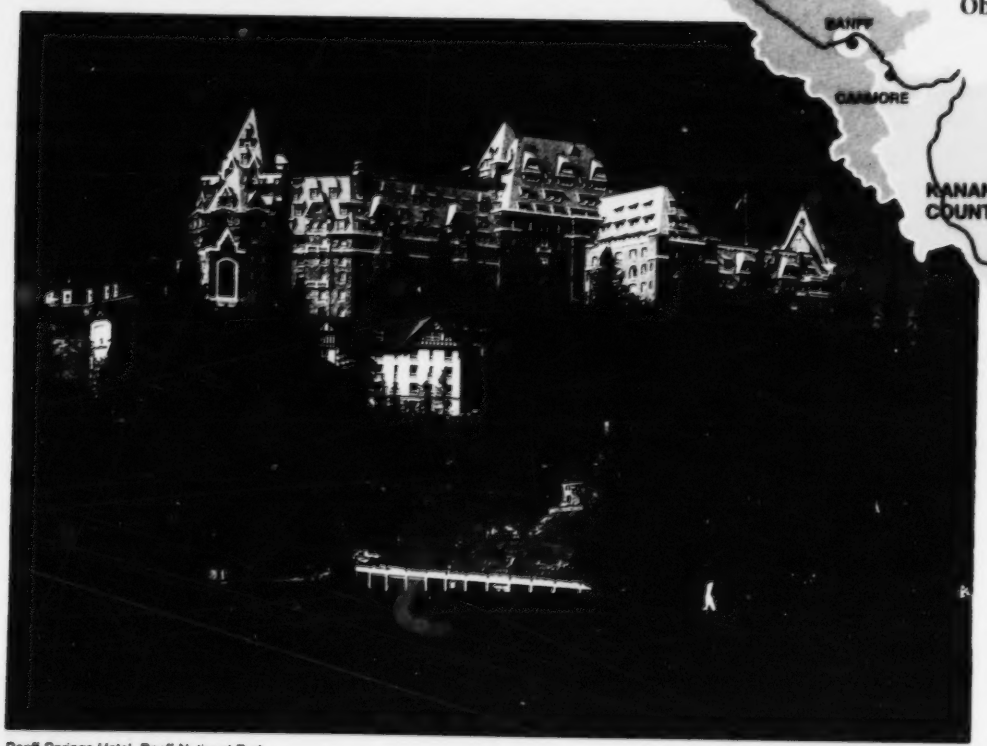
upscale shops, restaurants and other attractions is only a 30-minute drive away.

In the absence of detailed market information, the current proposal to develop a golfing resort at the Georgetown location appears to seriously overestimate the potential golfing market. This is particularly true considering the extremely short (five months) golfing season in Alberta. Canmore can perhaps best serve the Kananaskis Country and Banff National Park region by providing the basic service facilities needed to ensure a smoothly run tourism industry. The basic service facilities could include light industrial servicing and staff housing for major properties located in Banff. This would also provide Canmore with an increase in employment and a larger tax base from which the community can draw.

Recommendations

1. A detailed feasibility study which assesses the existing and potential market for golfers in the Kananaskis Country and Banff region must be completed before the Alberta Government considers supporting development of an additional 45-hole golf course and 350-room deluxe hotel property at the Georgetown site, or any other development of this magnitude proposed for the Canmore area.
2. The community of Canmore should be encouraged to further develop its role as a service community to both Kananaskis Country and Banff National Park, while maintaining its small town community image.

Banff National Park/Banff Townsite



Banff Springs Hotel, Banff National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Established in 1885 and encompassing 6 640 square km (2 564 square mi.), Banff is Canada's first National Park. The park is noted for its ice-capped peaks, beautiful scenery, deep valleys, glaciers, hot springs, lakes, alpine meadows and abundant wildlife. The townsite of Banff is open year-round with a permanent population of 4 200 and an additional 1 500 temporary year-round transient staff. Mount Norquay, Sunshine and Lake Louise Ski Areas are all within the Park boundaries. Access is via the Icefields Parkway and Highway 1. A total of 378 km (235 mi.) in the Park are paved and an additional 240 km (149 mi.) are unpaved roads. Total visitor attendance was 3 329 200 in 1987.

Historically the townsite of Banff has been managed by the National Parks Service. In 1988 the townspeople of Banff voted for municipal government status similar to that of other communities in Alberta. The request has been approved and an amendment effective January 1, 1990 will be made to the National Parks Act. The General Municipal Plan for Banff is currently being developed and it is hoped that it will address the primary concerns of the town, recognizing that Banff has unique international prominence and cannot be planned as a conventional community.

Observations

The townsite of Banff is the most valuable and single most important international tourism resource in Alberta. It is currently drawing visitors from around the world primarily on a reputation developed

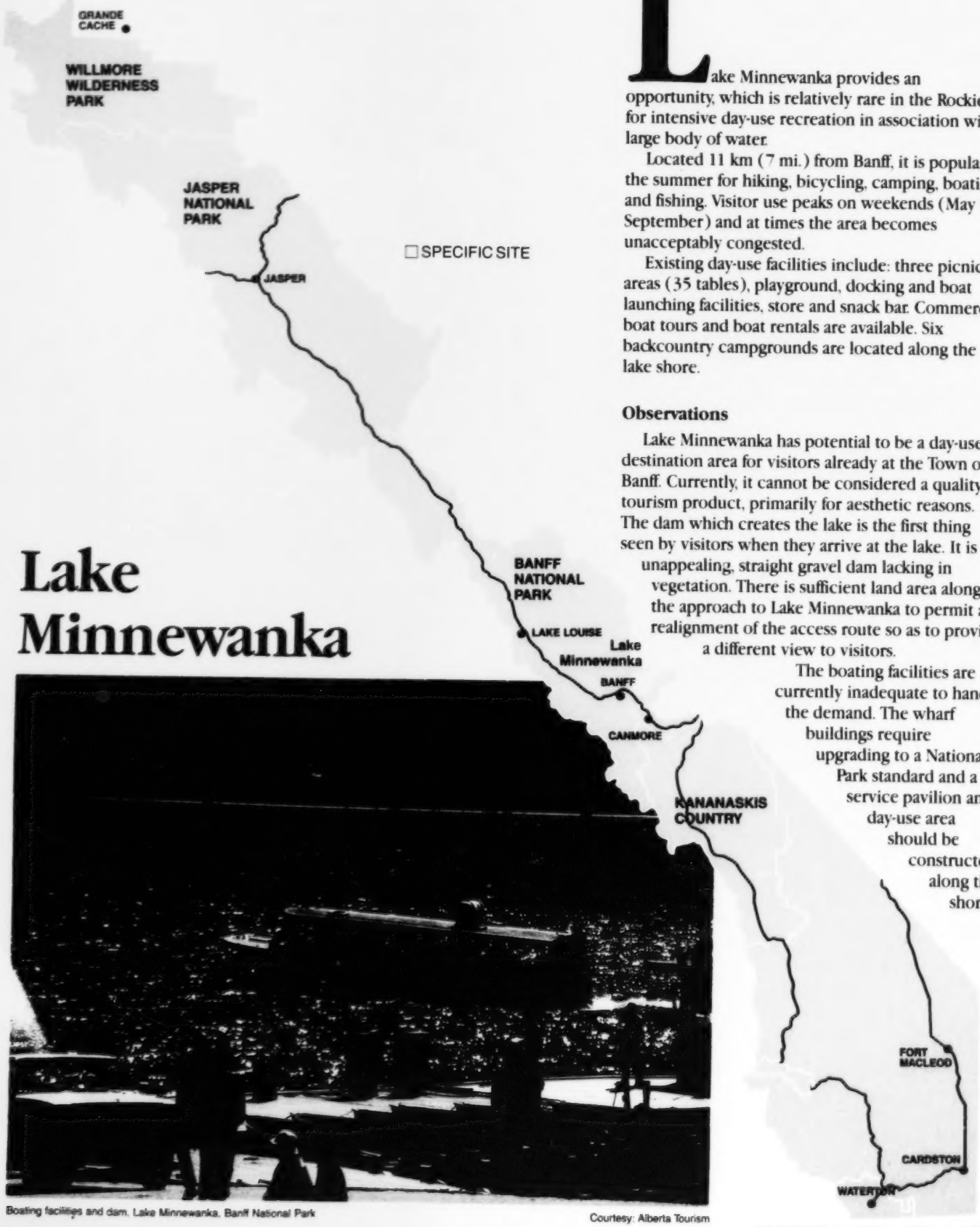
20 to 25 years ago, centering around the grand old Banff Springs Hotel and the Banff hot springs. It is obvious that over the years development in the Banff townsite has not been sufficiently controlled to allow the community to both meet increasing visitor demands yet still maintain its National Park image. Commercial development is already out of hand, seriously affecting the visual aesthetics of the town. Developments unnecessary to the function of the townsite, such as staff housing and light industrial facilities, are quickly using up some of the most valuable land base.

The townsite of Banff has an historical image and character and requires a strong theme to guide it through the changing tourism industry in the next five to 10 years. Growth of the townsite will have to take one of two routes; either an increase in density or an expanded town boundary. The town needs a long-term plan which must address the critical elements of visitor movements and social requirements. The long-term plan must seek to re-establish the atmosphere, lifestyle and grandeur of the former railway and motorcar vacation destination.

Recommendations

1. A long-term plan is required for the townsite of Banff to accommodate growth in the tourism industry. The plan must:
   a. develop an architecturally designed streetscape,
   b. relieve the visual clutter,
   c. create a more pleasing way to move walking visitors around the townsite to enjoy the shopping facilities and surrounding environment, for example a pedestrian mall on Banff Avenue and a footbridge near the Bow Falls,
   d. develop parking areas away from the mainstreet for RVs, cars and other vehicles,
   e. soften the strip development which is starting to occur on the way into town,
   f. introduce architectural controls for commercial signs, building design, landscaping, etc.
   g. enable selective purchase and removal or redesign of buildings which do not fit into the image and character of Banff,
   h. address the possibility of moving staff housing and light industry to Canmore in order to make the valuable land within the townsite available for other, more appropriate uses.
2. Alberta Tourism has a vested interest in ensuring Banff can satisfy its visitors now and in the future. The department should become actively involved in assisting the Town of Banff to prepare its long-term plan and provide financial assistance through existing programs wherever possible.

Lake Minnewanka



Boating facilities and dam, Lake Minnewanka, Banff National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Lake Minnewanka provides an opportunity, which is relatively rare in the Rockies, for intensive day-use recreation in association with a large body of water.

Located 11 km (7 mi.) from Banff, it is popular in the summer for hiking, bicycling, camping, boating and fishing. Visitor use peaks on weekends (May to September) and at times the area becomes unacceptably congested.

Existing day-use facilities include: three picnic areas (35 tables), playground, docking and boat launching facilities, store and snack bar. Commercial boat tours and boat rentals are available. Six backcountry campgrounds are located along the lake shore.

Observations

Lake Minnewanka has potential to be a day-use destination area for visitors already at the Town of Banff. Currently, it cannot be considered a quality tourism product, primarily for aesthetic reasons. The dam which creates the lake is the first thing seen by visitors when they arrive at the lake. It is an unappealing, straight gravel dam lacking in vegetation. There is sufficient land area along the approach to Lake Minnewanka to permit a realignment of the access route so as to provide a different view to visitors.

The boating facilities are currently inadequate to handle the demand. The wharf buildings require upgrading to a National Park standard and a service pavilion and day-use area should be constructed along the shore.

The parking area is inadequate for the current traffic using the lake, and should be upgraded to meet current and future demand.

Recommendations

1. The access road to the lake should be relocated so the dam no longer becomes the single visual focal point for arriving visitors.
2. The dam should be landscaped to further soften the straight, gray, gravel structure.
3. The boating facilities should be upgraded to meet basic aesthetic standards for the National Park.
4. Parks Canada should provide a public boat launching area, service pavilion and improved parking for visitors to the lake.

Sunshine Village Ski Area

Sunshine Village ski area, Banff National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Sunshine Village Ski Area has become an important North American and international ski area since its establishment in 1934. Ranking first in Alberta for total annual skier days, Sunshine Village receives approximately 35 per cent of its skiers from outside Alberta. Sunshine Village has 84 hotel and chalet rooms on the ski hill which can accommodate approximately 200 overnight visitors; a significant advantage over the other two ski hills in the region, Lake Louise and Mount Norquay which do not have on-site accommodation.

In order to meet the growing demands of the skier market, Sunshine Village Corporation has identified a number of elements which must be incorporated into the ski area including; a new parking area at the base of the hill, a high speed quadruple chairlift, increased capacity for on-site accommodation and new ski runs.

At present, there is only one gondola to take visitors from the parking area to skiing terrain on the mountain. This is a critical bottle-neck in skier movement, resulting in line-ups of up to one hour at peak periods. In addition, the limited terrain available for expansion of the current parking lot has forced Sunshine Village Corporation to add additional parking even further from the base facilities. This increased distance now means skiers must walk up to half a mile from their vehicles to the base facilities carrying all their ski gear.

To date, the plans for improved parking, expanded on-hill accommodation and new and upgraded lifts have not been approved by Parks Canada. The total cost is estimated to be

$75 million, with the goal of making Sunshine Village a world-class resort.

Observations

Sunshine Village has the capability to maintain Canada's image in the minds of the international skier. If not permitted to expand to meet the basic criteria for ski area success (ie. good access and scenery, reliable and quality skiing, integration of skiing terrain, maximum five to ten minute lift lines and a good quality base area) Canada's image as an international ski destination will be jeopardized. The proposed high-speed quad chairlift and new parking facilities are essential in order to take pressure off the intensely overcrowded base area.

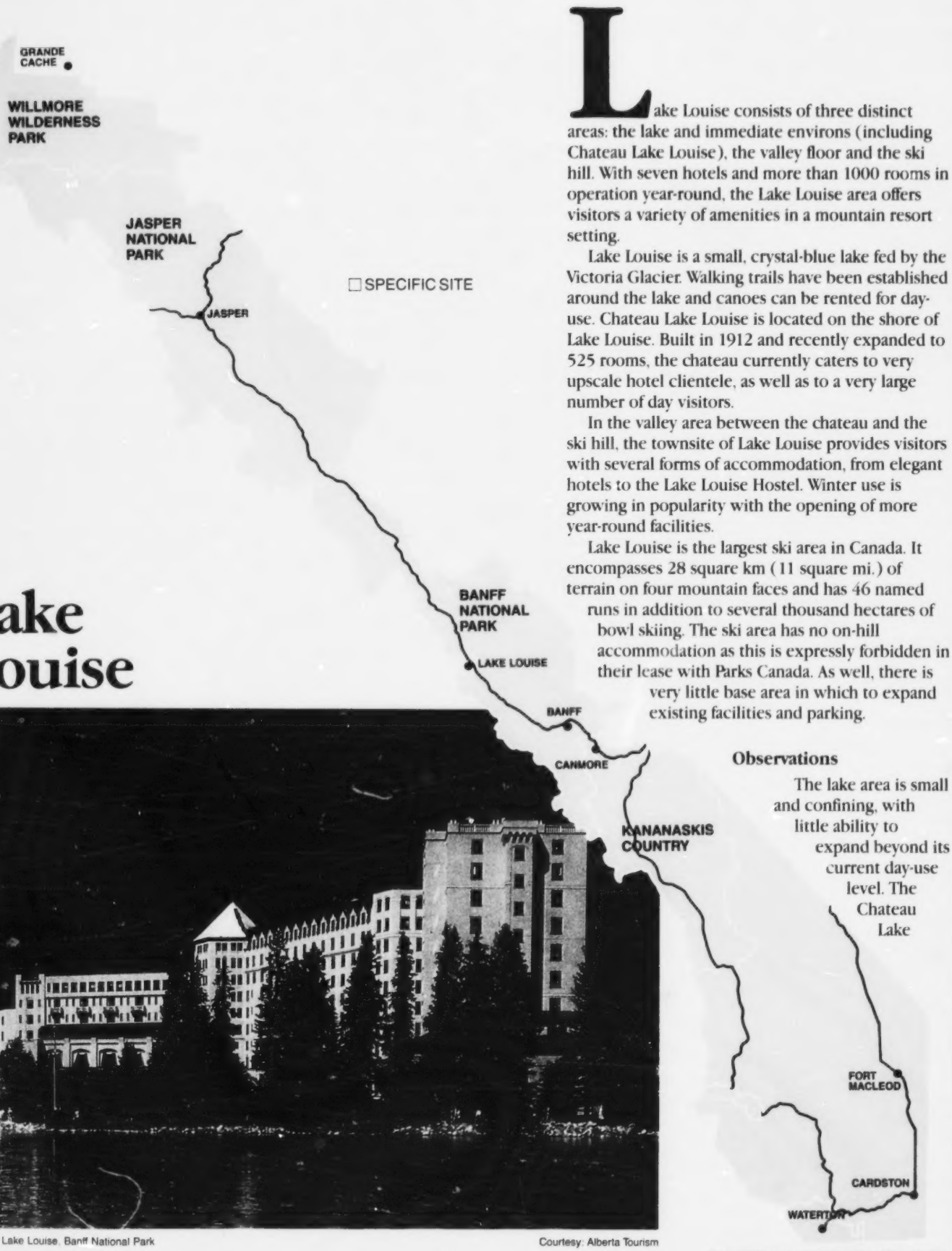
Recommendations

1. In the interest of maintaining the international skiing image of Alberta and Canada, the Alberta Government and the Government of Canada must support the upgrading of Sunshine Ski Area to meet the expectations of national and international visitors. This includes ski area expansion, new parking facilities, additional high speed lifts and on-site accommodation.
2. In order to relieve the current situation of intense crowding, priority must be given to approving the Sunshine Village Corporation's proposal to expand the base area parking and lift capability.

Lake Louise

Chateau Lake Louise, Banff National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



Lake Louise consists of three distinct areas: the lake and immediate environs (including Chateau Lake Louise), the valley floor and the ski hill. With seven hotels and more than 1000 rooms in operation year-round, the Lake Louise area offers visitors a variety of amenities in a mountain resort setting.

Lake Louise is a small, crystal-blue lake fed by the Victoria Glacier. Walking trails have been established around the lake and canoes can be rented for day-use. Chateau Lake Louise is located on the shore of Lake Louise. Built in 1912 and recently expanded to 525 rooms, the chateau currently caters to very upscale hotel clientele, as well as to a very large number of day visitors.

In the valley area between the chateau and the ski hill, the townsite of Lake Louise provides visitors with several forms of accommodation, from elegant hotels to the Lake Louise Hostel. Winter use is growing in popularity with the opening of more year-round facilities.

Lake Louise is the largest ski area in Canada. It encompasses 28 square km (11 square mi.) of terrain on four mountain faces and has 46 named runs in addition to several thousand hectares of bowl skiing. The ski area has no on-hill accommodation as this is expressly forbidden in their lease with Parks Canada. As well, there is very little base area in which to expand existing facilities and parking.

Observations

The lake area is small and confining, with little ability to expand beyond its current day-use level. The Chateau Lake

Louise, however, is a world-class facility. The recent expansion of the hotel to include 125 new executive quality hotel rooms, one main dining room, an alpine style cafe and a variety of boutiques, has been completed with the utmost in excellence and quality. The interior decor which maintains a consistent Austrian Alps theme, is of world-class calibre.

The chateau has become a destination for day-use visitors from Banff, and those travelling along the Trans Canada highway or enroute to Jasper. There is a vast amount of pedestrian traffic in the chateau lobby, boutiques and restaurants, and a conflict is developing between registered hotel guests and day-use visitors. It has been recognized by hotel management that in order to maintain a high level of satisfaction for their paying guests, something must be done to create a partial segregation of users on the property. The Chateau Lake Louise may have a future maximum day-use capacity which cannot be exceeded without negatively impacting the experience of both day-use visitors and registered hotel guests. Because of the single access road to the chateau, limiting day-use visitors could be accomplished quite easily.

In order to accommodate the current number of vehicles at the lake and the chateau, construction has just been completed on a multi-level parkade adjacent to the hotel. The parkade has been architecturally designed to blend with the hotel, while maintaining the necessary function of the building and resolving the unsightly parking problem which previously existed.

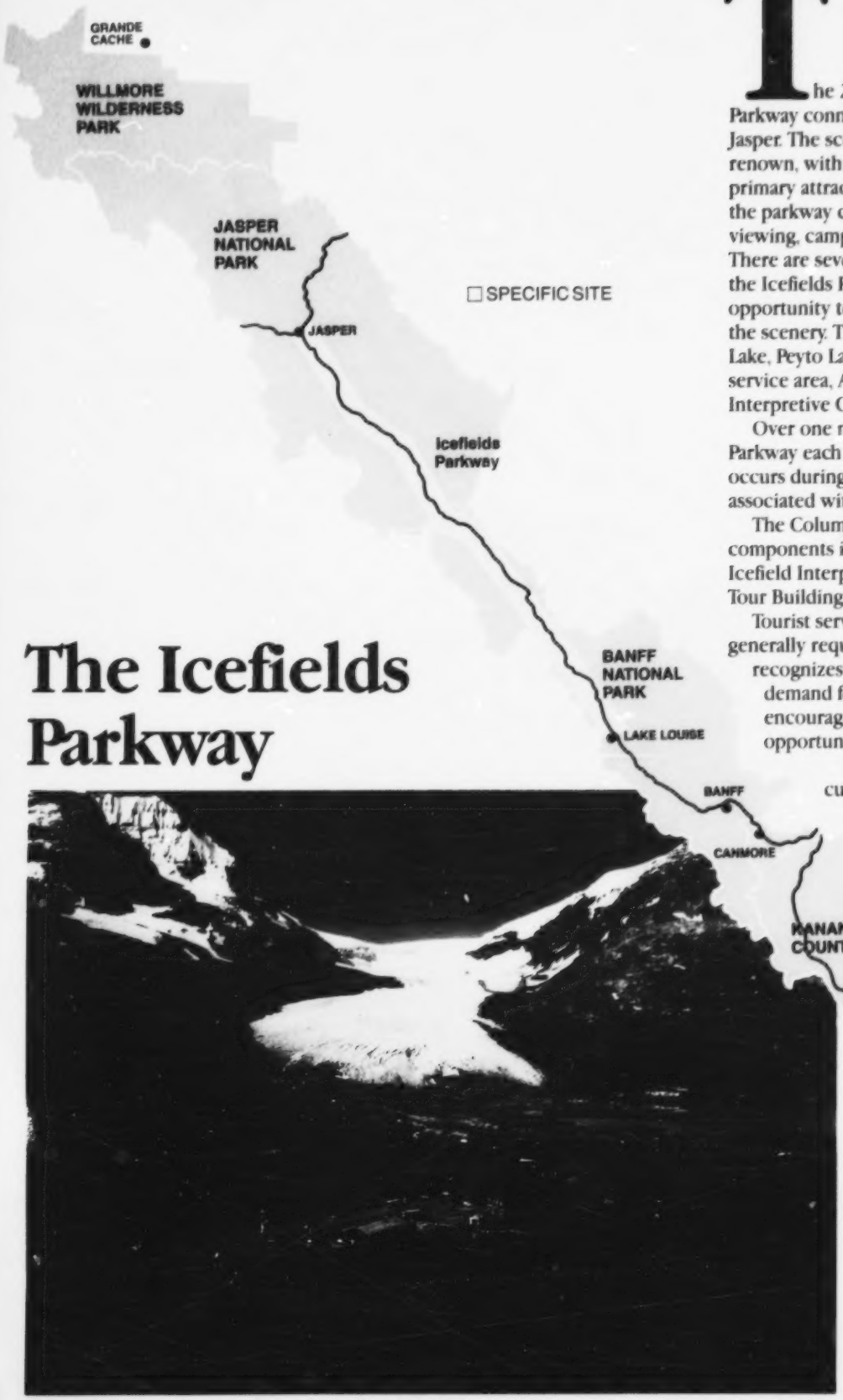
Below the lake in the townsite of Lake Louise, the Post Hotel has recently completed a major expansion and renovation of their historic property. This unique hotel caters to a slightly different clientele and does not fit into the world-class category. In designing the expansion and upgrading, the effect of several visual factors were not taken into consideration, including the location of the parking lot and the modern brightly coloured roof. The parking lot is located directly in front of the property, interfering with the line-of-sight from guest verandas. The bright red roof on the hotel may be the latest in hotel design, but does nothing to help the large property blend in with the surrounding environment or to create the feeling of an alpine resort.

Skiing Louise is the ski area situated across the highway from the townsite of Lake Louise. It must upgrade and expand to meet growing demands from the non-resident ski market. The existing base area is small and crowded, and has few obvious opportunities for expansion. With annual skier visits of more than 300 000, the facility suffers from acute congestion on busy days. New lifts must be considered to alleviate the line-up problems. It is understood that the owner proposes a detachable quadruple lift, but it has not been determined if such a lift is capable of alleviating the problem. Skiing Louise, together with Sunshine Village, provide the primary attractions for non-resident skiers.

Recommendations

1. The first priority in the resolution of the overcrowding currently occurring at Lake Louise should be to determine the optimum daily visitor volumes at the chateau. One way of determining optimum volume is to conduct progressive vertical photography. This involves taking aerial photos of the site during different levels of visitor use. Actual numbers can be determined and correlated with visitor satisfaction of the overall Lake Louise experience and with the chateau's ability to service their needs.
2. Once an optimum day-use visitor capacity is determined, a method of controlling day-use vehicle traffic should be implemented. As an example, vehicular traffic can be confined to the lower townsite area and an alternate method of transporting pedestrians to the chateau could be developed (such as an old cog train).
3. Future development at Lake Louise should be controlled by strict development guidelines in order to maintain the aesthetic image of the National Park.
4. The Lake Louise Ski Area should be expanded and upgraded so that it can become truly competitive in the international ski market.

The Icefields Parkway



Columbia Icefields, Columbia Icefields Chalet in foreground, Jasper National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Government

WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

The 228 kilometre (142 mile) Icefields Parkway connects Lake Louise and the townsite of Jasper. The scenery along the route is internationally renown, with the Columbia Icefield being the primary attraction. Major recreation activities along the parkway corridor include sightseeing, wildlife viewing, camping, picnicking, hiking and bicycling. There are several small development nodes along the Icefields Parkway which provide visitors with an opportunity to get out of their vehicles and enjoy the scenery. These include Num-ti-jah Lodge at Bow Lake, Peyto Lake, Saskatchewan River Crossing service area, Athabasca Glacier (Icefields and Interpretive Centre) and Athabasca Falls.

Over one million visitors travel on the Icefields Parkway each year. The vast majority of visitor use occurs during the summer months and is generally associated with one-day excursions.

The Columbia Icefields area has several components including the Athabasca Glacier, the Icefield Interpretive Centre, the Glacier Sightseeing Tour Building and the Columbia Icefield Chalet.

Tourist services and facilities are limited and generally require upgrading. Parks Canada recognizes the area's limited capacity to meet demand for overnight accommodation and will encourage more effective use of existing opportunities.

An area redevelopment plan is currently being prepared for the Columbia Icefields area. Conceptual planning is nearing completion. The next phase will evaluate redevelopment options.

Observations

The Num-ti-jah Lodge is in an excellent location to cater to a large number of day-use visitors. The lodge currently has 28 units of accommodation, but considering the location and the large volume of traffic along the highway, it could expand to accommodate a much larger number of overnight visitors. Alternatively, an additional 100 to 200-room chateau-style hotel could be built at or near the same site.

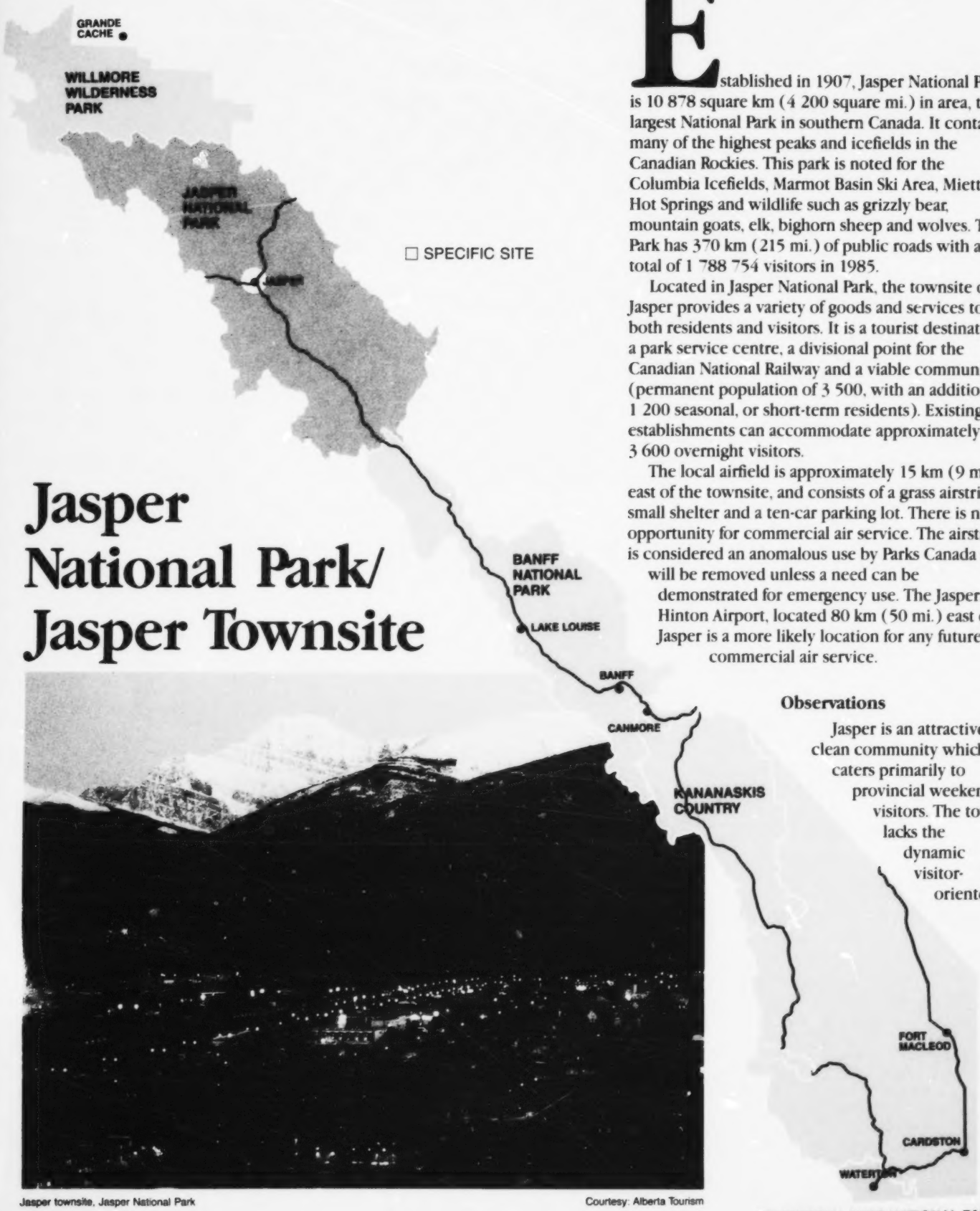
The Saskatchewan River Crossing provides required servicing, such as restaurant, vehicle service and accommodation facilities, for both private vehicle and tour bus traffic. It does not appear that expansion of this development is warranted at the present time.

Currently the facilities at the Columbia Icefields have no visual homogeneity, resulting in an unattractive development node. The buildings need to be architecturally similar in order to give the area the appearance of a single visitor node or destination. It may, however, be more logical to move the interpretive centre and the Glacier Sightseeing Tour building nearer the Glacier. As the toe of the glacier recedes over time, it becomes discoloured with the incorporated ground moraine. The beauty of the actual icefields cannot be seen until visitors travel up onto the glacier for quite some distance.

Recommendations

1. Bow Lake (the Num-ti-jah Lodge location) should be the next major development node along the Icefields Parkway. Serious consideration should be given to permitting development of a grand chateau style hotel at this location.
2. The Saskatchewan River Crossing service area should remain at its current level of development.
3. The facilities which currently exist at the Columbia Icefields are unattractive from a visual design perspective. The interpretive centre should be either redesigned to fit in better with its environs and associated buildings or, preferably, torn down and a new facility constructed at a more appropriate location adjacent to the glacier.
4. A public road should be developed which permits visitors to drive up to the side of the glacier.

Jasper National Park/ Jasper Townsite



Established in 1907, Jasper National Park is 10 878 square km (4 200 square mi.) in area, the largest National Park in southern Canada. It contains many of the highest peaks and icefields in the Canadian Rockies. This park is noted for the Columbia Icefields, Marmot Basin Ski Area, Miette Hot Springs and wildlife such as grizzly bear, mountain goats, elk, bighorn sheep and wolves. The Park has 370 km (215 mi.) of public roads with a total of 1 788 754 visitors in 1985.

Located in Jasper National Park, the townsite of Jasper provides a variety of goods and services to both residents and visitors. It is a tourist destination, a park service centre, a divisional point for the Canadian National Railway and a viable community (permanent population of 3 500, with an additional 1 200 seasonal, or short-term residents). Existing establishments can accommodate approximately 3 600 overnight visitors.

The local airfield is approximately 15 km (9 mi.) east of the townsite, and consists of a grass airstrip, small shelter and a ten-car parking lot. There is no opportunity for commercial air service. The airstrip is considered an anomalous use by Parks Canada and will be removed unless a need can be demonstrated for emergency use. The Jasper/ Hinton Airport, located 80 km (50 mi.) east of Jasper is a more likely location for any future commercial air service.

Observations

Jasper is an attractive, clean community which caters primarily to provincial weekend visitors. The town lacks the dynamic visitor-oriented

Jasper townsite, Jasper National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

atmosphere so obvious in Banff. This is partly due to the physical layout of the town and partly because Jasper is much further from potential markets and does not receive the same volume of visitor traffic. In order to increase the attractiveness of Jasper to international markets, it must be more accessible by air. Visitors must be able to come directly from Vancouver, Edmonton, or Calgary to a location within a 30- to 60-minute drive from the townsite (i.e., Hinton).

Jasper Park Lodge, located just outside the townsite, is the primary facility attraction in this area. However, as visitors approach the Lodge from the highway, the power house is the first view they have of the lodge buildings.

The lodge itself is composed of the main building (which includes dining rooms, lounges, boutiques and indoor recreation facilities), guest housing (which ranges from motel to condominium style), staff housing and a golf course. The property is visually subdued, with development spread around a portion of the lake and interspersed among the trees. In this setting, none of the guest chalets have a view of the mountain scenery, although those on the waterfront do see the lake. The main lodge, like the town of Jasper, is lacking a true alpine resort atmosphere. The resulting impression is that of a quiet retreat, as opposed to a world-class hotel property.

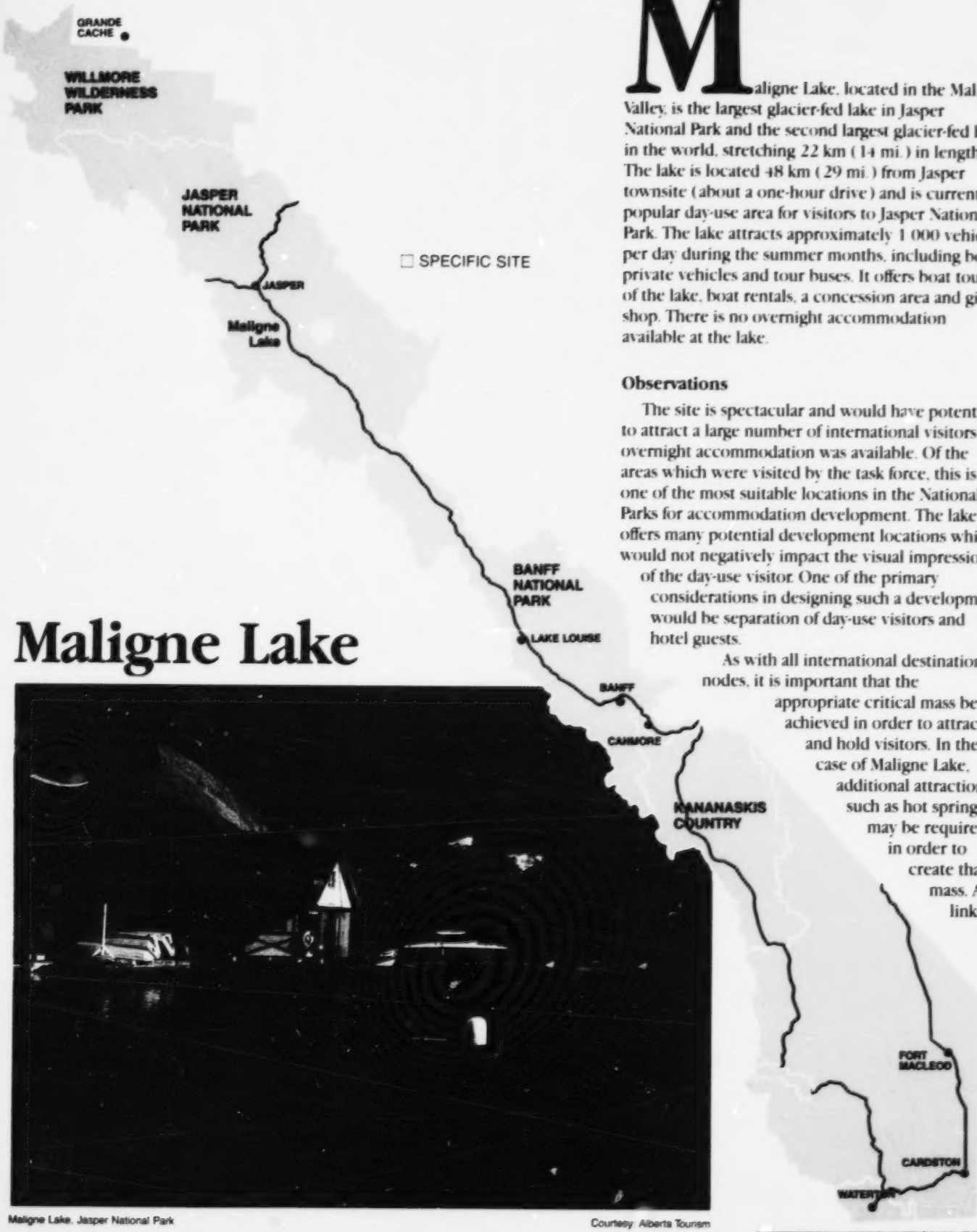
Recommendations

1. The Government of Alberta must consider subsidizing the development of the Jasper/Hinton airport to accommodate scheduled air service from Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton if Jasper National Park is to become a higher profile international destination.
2. The access road to the lodge should be landscaped and screened for aesthetic purposes.
3. Jasper Park Lodge should be marketed as a quiet resort to the domestic market, as opposed to trying to compete with Banff and Lake Louise for a larger portion of the international market.

Maligne Lake

Maligne Lake, Jasper National Park

Courtesy: Alberta Tourism



Maligne Lake, located in the Maligne Valley, is the largest glacier-fed lake in Jasper National Park and the second largest glacier-fed lake in the world, stretching 22 km (14 mi.) in length. The lake is located 48 km (29 mi.) from Jasper townsite (about a one-hour drive) and is currently a popular day-use area for visitors to Jasper National Park. The lake attracts approximately 1 000 vehicles per day during the summer months, including both private vehicles and tour buses. It offers boat tours of the lake, boat rentals, a concession area and gift shop. There is no overnight accommodation available at the lake.

Observations

The site is spectacular and would have potential to attract a large number of international visitors if overnight accommodation was available. Of the areas which were visited by the task force, this is one of the most suitable locations in the National Parks for accommodation development. The lake offers many potential development locations which would not negatively impact the visual impression of the day-use visitor. One of the primary considerations in designing such a development would be separation of day-use visitors and hotel guests.

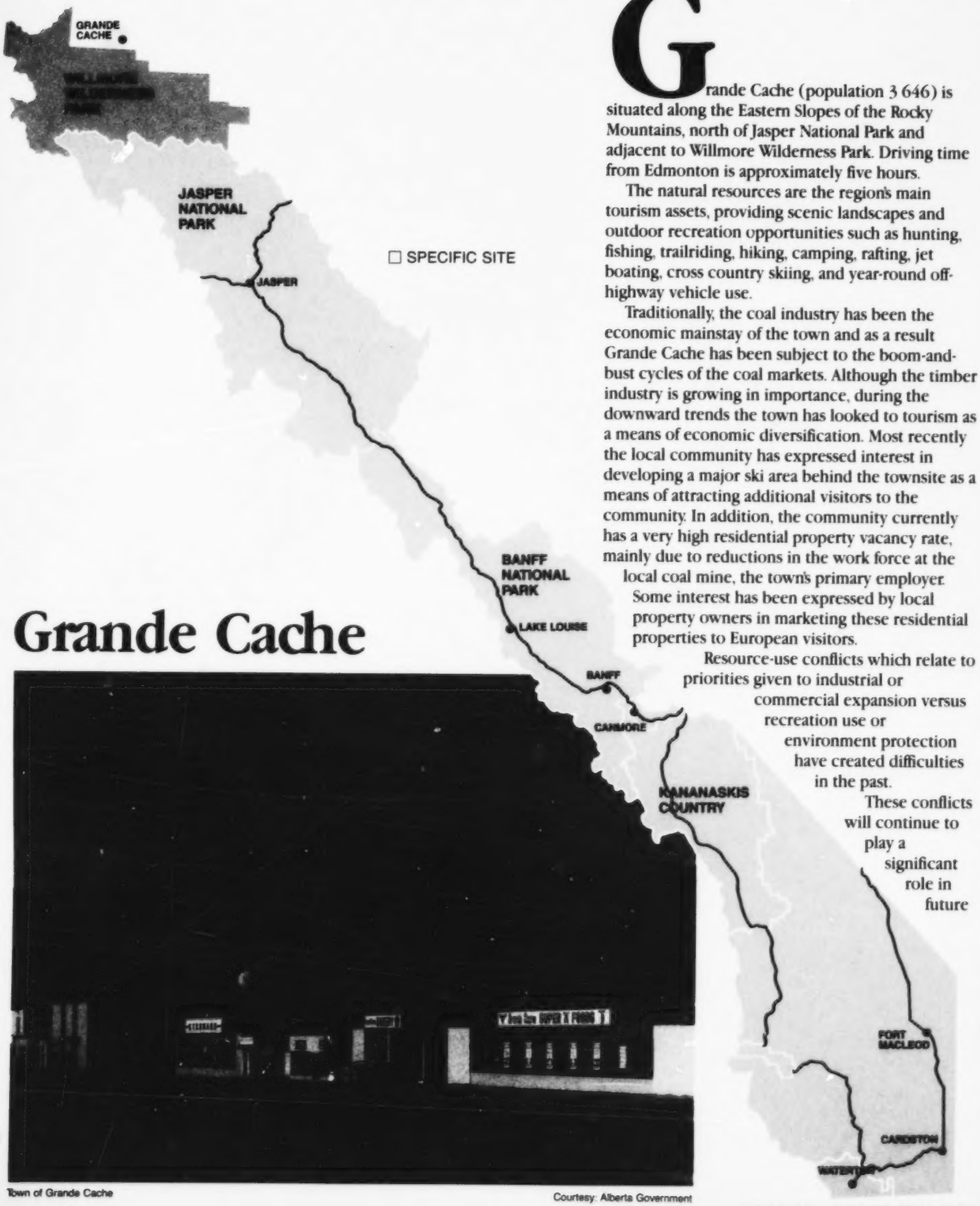
As with all international destination nodes, it is important that the appropriate critical mass be achieved in order to attract and hold visitors. In the case of Maligne Lake, additional attractions such as hot springs may be required in order to create that mass. Air links

between Vancouver, Calgary or Edmonton and the Jasper/Hinton Airport will also be critical in attracting international visitors to a grand hotel development at Maligne Lake.

Recommendations

1. Maligne Lake should be considered a prime location for a grand chateau style hotel development.
2. No staff accommodation should be permitted at the site.
3. In developing overnight accommodation at Maligne Lake, care must be taken to ensure a separation of day-use visitors and hotel guests.
4. Additional attractions should be introduced in the area to create the critical mass required to attract and hold international visitors.
5. The Government of Alberta must consider subsidizing the development of the Jasper/Hinton airport to accommodate scheduled air service from Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton, if Jasper National Park is to become a higher profile international destination.

Grande Cache



Grande Cache (population 3 646) is situated along the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, north of Jasper National Park and adjacent to Willmore Wilderness Park. Driving time from Edmonton is approximately five hours.

The natural resources are the region's main tourism assets, providing scenic landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, trailriding, hiking, camping, rafting, jet boating, cross country skiing, and year-round off-highway vehicle use.

Traditionally, the coal industry has been the economic mainstay of the town and as a result Grande Cache has been subject to the boom-and-bust cycles of the coal markets. Although the timber industry is growing in importance, during the downward trends the town has looked to tourism as a means of economic diversification. Most recently the local community has expressed interest in developing a major ski area behind the townsite as a means of attracting additional visitors to the community. In addition, the community currently has a very high residential property vacancy rate, mainly due to reductions in the work force at the local coal mine, the town's primary employer. Some interest has been expressed by local property owners in marketing these residential properties to European visitors.

Resource-use conflicts which relate to priorities given to industrial or commercial expansion versus recreation use or environment protection have created difficulties in the past. These conflicts will continue to play a significant role in future

Town of Grande Cache

Courtesy: Alberta Government

WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

tourism development.

Willmore Wilderness Park, established in 1959, is the only wilderness park in Canada with its own legislation. The 4 597 square km (1 775 square mi.) park has as its purpose the conservation and protection of its natural resources and preservation of its natural beauty. As a result of its wilderness focus, the Willmore Wilderness Park Act is very restrictive about activities permitted in the park. No motorized vehicles or structures other than tents are permitted in the park, and no aircraft may fly over or land in the park. However, hunting, fishing, horse use and camping are permitted. Willmore Wilderness Park is a significant attraction for visitors seeking a wilderness experience.

Observations

Although set in a scenic location in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the Town of Grande Cache is a relatively new town with very little aesthetic appeal or historic charm. The town contains all the recreation amenities expected in a community of 4 500 people, including a small golf course and campground.

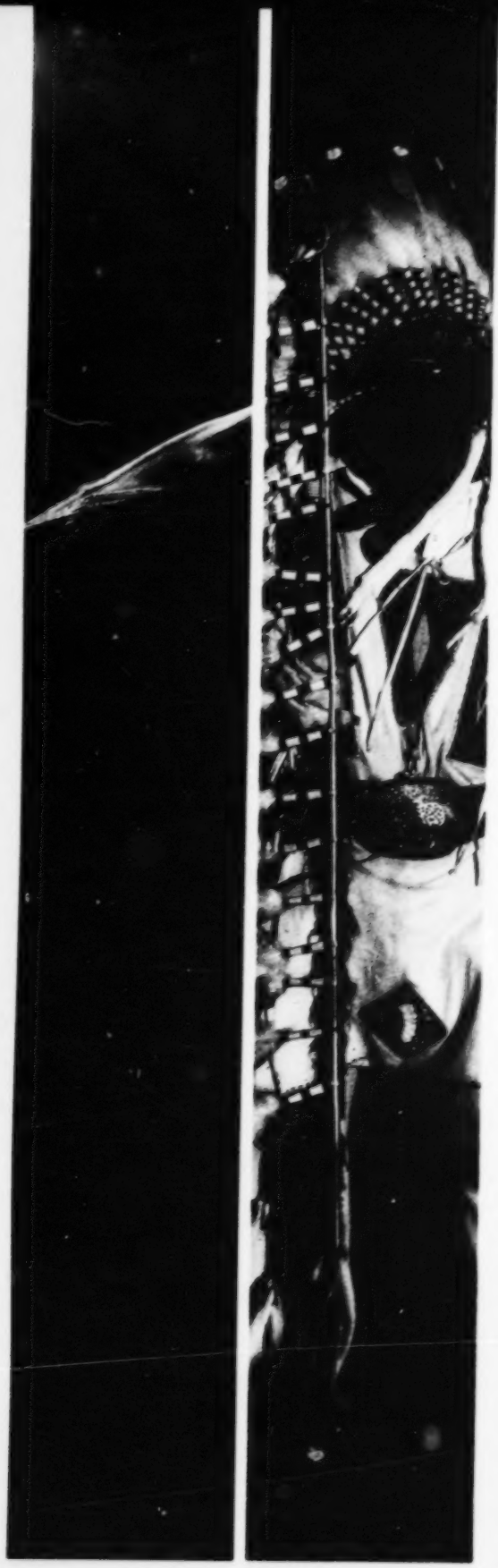
Grande Cache currently caters to a small visitor market which includes vehicle traffic enroute to or from Grande Prairie as well as Willmore Wilderness Park visitors. The market expansion potential for this community is severely limited by its remoteness. The community is more than 400 km (248 mi.) from Edmonton and 140 km (87 mi.) from the primary highway between Edmonton and Jasper. Distance from major markets, as well as significant intervening opportunities (eg. Jasper National Park) are viewed as an impediment to attracting large markets.

Considering the distance to markets and the intervening opportunities, it is unlikely that a ski area development can be economically self-sufficient.

Any attempt to market vacant residential properties for the purposes of attracting international visitors would be handicapped by the poor quality of available properties and the lack of world-class services and facilities in Grande Cache.

Recommendations

1. The community of Grande Cache should be permitted to develop a regional ski hill if they so desire, but due to the distance from markets and the quality of intervening opportunities, under no circumstances should the government consider developing a major ski area at this location.
2. Alberta Tourism should not become involved in marketing residential properties in Grande Cache to international visitors. Because of the poor quality of available properties and the lack of world-class services and facilities in the community, supporting such a project could have serious negative impacts on Alberta's international image.



General Observations and Recommendations

In addition to specific observations and recommendations made by the task force, there were also several general themes or ideas identified which fit into the broader spectrum of Alberta's image in the international marketplace. These included the theme of railroads and grand hotels, the importance of wildlife to the visitor experience and the expectation of historical interpretation. There was also a concern regarding the National Parks Policy.

Railroads and Grand Hotels

Banff first became known by the touring aristocracy over 100 years ago. The attraction was a combination of the rugged Rocky Mountains, the Banff hot springs and the Banff Springs Hotel. The railroad was fast becoming the fashionable way to travel and view the country, and was certainly an integral part of the romantic touring experience. Although much has changed over the last century, travellers worldwide remain attracted to a romantic sightseeing trip.

Observations

A large percentage of international travellers is still very much interested in a unique holiday experience which combines excellent services and quality facilities in an historic or nostalgic atmosphere. Redevelopment of the railways to provide an opportunity for touring the Canadian Rockies, combined with the refurbishment of the grand old railroad hotels, can provide the experience desired by this segment of the market.

Recommendations

Short railroad trips from Calgary to Banff or Hinton to Jasper would appeal to a large portion of the destination market; not only those specifically interested in the railroad era, but also those visitors seeking a unique holiday experience. In addition, variations on the traditional railroad experience, such as glass-domed coaches, could significantly add to the appeal of such a holiday.

Chateau Lake Louise and Victoria Glacier (after 1912)
Courtesy: CP Rail Corporate Archives

Elk, Banff National Park
Courtesy: Alberta Government

Wildlife and the International Visitor

Wildlife is a very important attraction in Alberta. The Rocky Mountain region of the province is home to a variety of species, from almost-tame ground squirrels to the majestic elk. Many species are easily visible and can be viewed in certain locations with a good degree of consistency, for example, animals inhabiting the National Parks of Waterton, Banff and Jasper.

Observations

There are other opportunities in the province to satisfy natural visitor curiosity and interest in Alberta's wildlife. Several ideas deserve further attention, such as development of; a wildlife interpretive museum in the southwest; an animal park designed to maximize the wilderness setting; permanent viewing locations with permanent mineral licks (such as in the meadow outside the Kananaskis Country Administration Offices); and other opportunities to experience and photograph wildlife in Alberta.

Recommendations

1. The Alberta Government must recognize the significance of wildlife in the minds of international visitors and take steps to give native wildlife species a higher profile in the total visitor experience.

Historical Interpretation

The Canadian Rockies, nationally and internationally, symbolize the Alberta tourism experience. However, Alberta has more to offer the tourist than just a mountain experience, and heritage resources represent one of the best opportunities for expanding tourism in Alberta.

Observations

The international marketing image portrayed by Alberta is very strongly oriented towards the majestic Rocky Mountains and the pioneering west. Although the Canadian Rockies' image held by visitors is easily satisfied, the historical interpretation surrounding the pioneering west, including cowboys, Indians and the RCMP, is not portrayed to a degree which satisfies the international visitor.

As the expectation and anticipation of the presence of these images already exists in the minds of Alberta's international visitors, the province has only to deliver a more visual product.

Southwest Alberta offers an excellent opportunity to further develop and integrate heritage resources. Expansion of Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre and the development of the ecomuseum in the Crowsnest Pass and the Remington Carriage Collection in Cardston, together with existing developments at Frank Slide and Fort Macleod, will contribute greatly to developing a higher profile heritage theme.

Recommendations

1. Examples of expansion of historical interpretation which should be considered include; stronger visual presentation and marketing of the RCMP at Fort Macleod and a Native interpretive facility in the southwest corner of the province to complement the existing focus on Native heritage at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump.

Chief Red Cloud, Peigan Indians with NWMP — #B1051
Courtesy: Provincial Archives of Alberta, E. Brown Collection

National Parks Policy

In 1981 the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program was established to plan the four contiguous mountain national parks in western Canada: Kootenay and Yoho National Parks in British Columbia and Banff and Jasper National Parks in Alberta.

After extensive public consultation, completion of ecological inventories and an evaluation of natural resources in all four parks, the document *In Trust for Tomorrow: A Management Framework for the Four Mountain Parks* was produced. This document provided the basis for preparing detailed management plans for each of the four parks.

The management plans for Banff and Jasper National Parks outline the way in which the parks will be managed during the next 15 years. A key issue addressed in the plans is the conflict between resource protection and visitor use. The guiding principle is clear: wherever conflicts occur between resource protection and increased use and development, protection will take precedence.

Each of the park management plans has a set of principles which form the basis for the plan's general framework. Several of those principles directly affect the tourism industry in Alberta and are identified as[4]:

Banff National Park

- Protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources will take precedence wherever conflicts occur between visitor use and facility development.
- In recognition of the park's already extensive infrastructure, the plan favours expansion and upgrading of existing facilities in disturbed areas; any new facilities will be concentrated in existing nodes rather than dispersed along the park's road system.
- The Canadian Parks Service recognizes Banff National Park as an important tourist destination and will encourage tourism initiatives which are in concert with the fundamental mandate to maintain National Parks unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
- The plan contains recognition that limits to the future growth and development of the Banff Townsite region must be established. Due to the region's high level of use and development, the focus will be on heritage resource protection. Development outside the town's boundaries will be restricted and wherever possible, the repair of existing environmental disturbances will be given priority. Additional facilities and services required by park visitors or residents will be located either outside the park or within the townsite boundaries.
- The Icefields Parkway will continue to be managed to maintain its status as an internationally acclaimed sightseeing route. The natural and aesthetic quality of the corridor will be enhanced by rehabilitating man-made disturbances, such as abandoned road alignments and borrow pits and by minimizing the visual impact of park facilities. Visitors travelling along the parkway will be provided with year-round opportunities to use, enjoy and learn about the spectacular natural landscape.

Banff Avenue, Town of Banff
Courtesy: Alberta Tourism

Jasper National Park

- Resource protection will take precedence over visitor use and facility development wherever conflicts occur. Visitor use will be managed to safeguard natural and cultural resources as well as the aesthetics of the park.
- Expansion and upgrading of facilities in previously developed areas will be favoured over the development of new facilities. Facilities will be concentrated in existing nodes rather than being dispersed throughout the park.
- Jasper National Park is a popular tourist destination and accordingly tourism initiatives which are in concert with the fundamental mandate to maintain National Parks unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations will be supported. The Canadian Parks Service itself will provide park opportunities closely associated with heritage resources rather than develop resort experiences. Activities that require a minimum of man-made facilities and depend upon the park's natural resources will be particularly encouraged.

As a direct result of the proposed changes to the national parks legislation and the ensuing public debate, the overall policy direction of the Canada Parks Service has become abundantly clear. Although not specifically stated above, the same philosophies and guiding principles apply to Waterton Lakes National Park.

What remains to be resolved is the day-to-day reality of the National Parks. In 1987, 5 864 700 people visited the three mountain National Parks. These visitors go to the parks to enjoy the scenery, fresh air and abundant wildlife. They may go to camp, hike, bike or to wine and dine in luxurious style. The desire of these visitors to enjoy the park and the comfort of a fine hotel has created many business opportunities for the private sector. In a sense, the economic success of the National Parks has created the issue of protection versus development. In the fiscal year 1987/88, visitors spent $400 million in the Banff and Jasper National Parks[5]. This generated approximately $62.6 million in federal, provincial and municipal tax revenue[6]. The positive impacts of the large volume of expenditures by visitors cannot be ignored, yet any additional services, whether they be new forms of accommodation, new hiking trails, more campgrounds, or more retail space, will have a potentially negative impact on the overall character of the parks.

National Parks have been established for Canadians and other visitors to enjoy, but these millions of people require a certain level of service and they have proven their willingness to pay. It is necessary to determine the balance between the level of visitor services required and the preservation and protection of the area.

Observations

The mountain National Parks of Waterton Lakes, Banff and Jasper and the more recent provincially developed Kananaskis Country, are focal points of Alberta's tourism industry.

From the volumes of policy which have been created, it is apparent that the Canadian Parks Service has every intention of protecting the National Parks from the adverse impacts of tourism and related development. What they have failed to realize, however, is that their management style is having quite the opposite effect. There is a distinct lack of planning occurring in the three National Park townsites, which seriously affects the visual aesthetics of the towns, particularly Banff, and results in a peculiar aggregation of industrial, residential, retail and institutional architectural forms. Outside the townsites the lack of facility planning is evidenced by poorly located development nodes with no architectural coherency or consistency, resulting in visitor locations which are not appealing or even functional. Two very obvious examples are Lake Minnewanka and the Columbia Icefield. Instead of actively and stringently applying planning restrictions to developments which do occur in the parks, the administration appears to have chosen to prevent as much development as possible, and when that is not possible, to permit development without any basic planning guidelines.

In order to ensure the National Parks maintain their attractiveness to Alberta's international visitors, it is imperative that sufficient expansion and improvement of visitor services is permitted. The National Parks Service should be required to act in a responsible manner and prepare the townsites of Waterton, Banff and Jasper for the visitors those communities will receive over the next 20 years. The focus should be on reworking what already exists in the way of development. Only then should consideration be given to other alternatives.

Recommendations

1. It is essential that National Park policies complement the needs of tourism and permit modernization and expansion of facilities where required.
2. Considering the opposing views of park administration and tourism operators, it is recommended that representatives from Alberta Tourism, Parks Canada and the chambers of commerce for Waterton, Banff and Jasper hold round table discussions in order to voice concerns and suggest resolutions to a variety of problems.

[5]Banff National Park and Jasper National Park Management Plan Summaries. Environment Canada, 1988 (QS-W227-000-EE-A1 and QS-W228-000-EE-A1)
[6]Rocky Mountain National Parks Utilization Study, Alberta Tourism, 1989
[6]Alberta Tourism, economic impact model, 1989

Overall Strategy Recommendations

From an examination of the study area as a whole, it is apparent that the sites are generally clustered into three regions, each of which is currently attracting a slightly different portion of Alberta's international market. This division of the study area is an important observation as it will allow for separate approaches to the development and marketing of such an extensive land base.

More specifically, each of these three regions contain both physical and cultural attractions which will be of interest to a targetable international market. The three regions have very loosely defined boundaries, and it could be argued that certain attractions belong in two adjacent regions. The important concept is that in addition to similarities, there are distinct differences between regions which can be used to Alberta's advantage in attracting private sector interest and in targeting international visitors.

In the long term, attractions within each of the regions must be developed and packaged with a specific target market in mind. A variety of packages, each with a different focus could be prepared for each of the regions.

Region 1

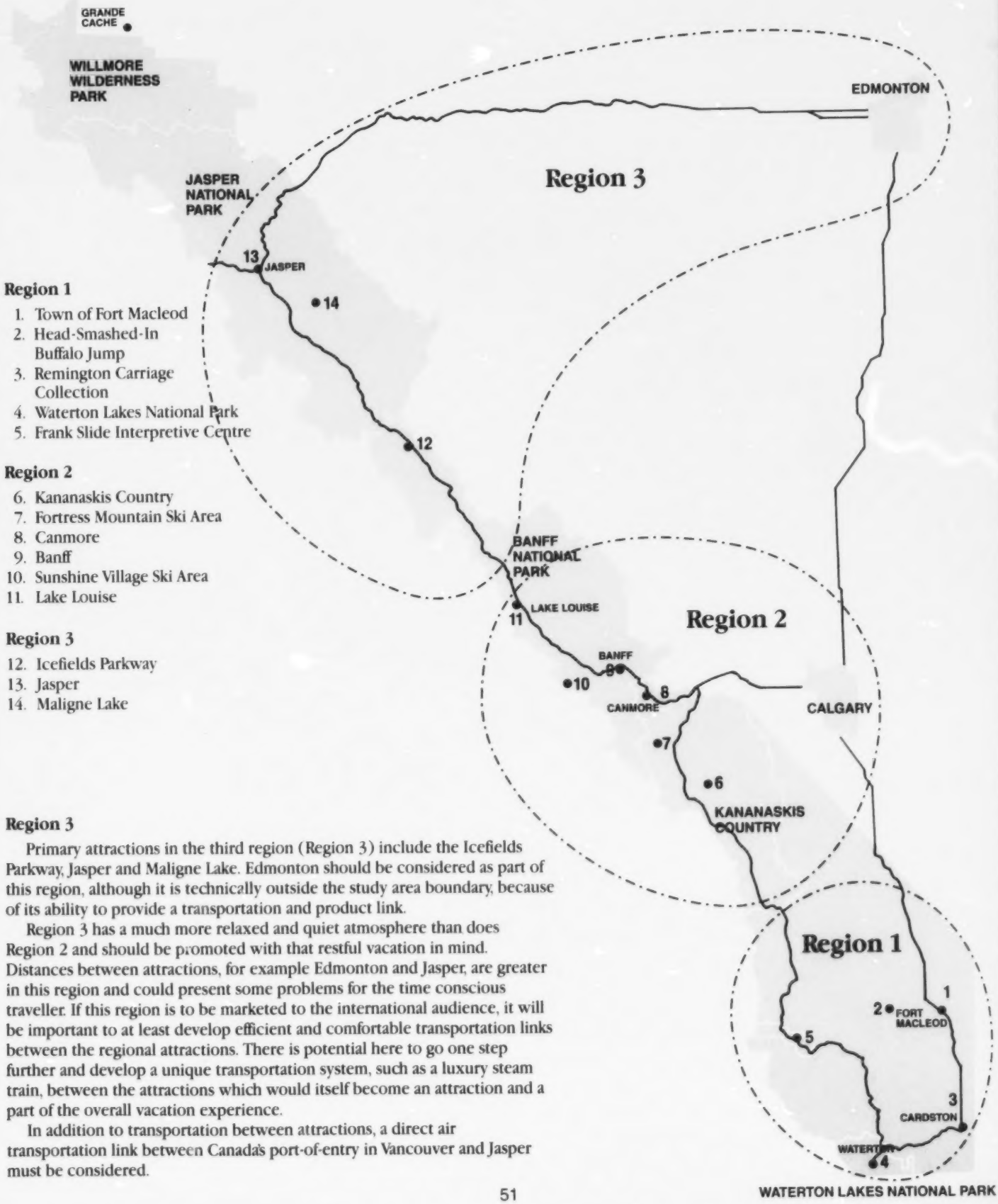
The first region (Region 1) is the southern-most section of the study area. It includes the Town of Fort Macleod, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, the Remington Carriage Collection, Waterton Lakes National Park and the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre.

Region 1 should be packaged as a culture and heritage oriented product. The marketing strength of this region lies in the quality and diversity of attractions which currently exist. Each of the attractions is unique, but a cultural/historic theme can be used to effectively promote these attractions to a specific international clientele. This region does have some limitations in its current capability to handle large numbers of visitors, for example, food services or accommodation for tour buses in the smaller communities of Fort Macleod or Cardston.

Region 2

The second region (Region 2) includes Kananaskis Country, Fortress Mountain Ski Area, Canmore, Banff, Sunshine Village Ski Area and Lake Louise. Calgary was not included in the study area but, for marketing purposes, should be considered part of this region.

Region 2 should be marketed as an upscale outdoor-oriented product because of the unique combination of outdoor recreation, luxurious accommodation and quality shopping in a mountainous setting of breathtaking scenery. The existing attractions lend themselves well to both the individual traveller and tour groups.



Region 1

1. Town of Fort Macleod
2. Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump
3. Remington Carriage Collection
4. Waterton Lakes National Park
5. Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

Region 2

6. Kananaskis Country
7. Fortress Mountain Ski Area
8. Canmore
9. Banff
10. Sunshine Village Ski Area
11. Lake Louise

Region 3

12. Icefields Parkway
13. Jasper
14. Maligne Lake

Region 3

Primary attractions in the third region (Region 3) include the Icefields Parkway, Jasper and Maligne Lake. Edmonton should be considered as part of this region, although it is technically outside the study area boundary, because of its ability to provide a transportation and product link.

Region 3 has a much more relaxed and quiet atmosphere than does Region 2 and should be promoted with that restful vacation in mind. Distances between attractions, for example Edmonton and Jasper, are greater in this region and could present some problems for the time conscious traveller. If this region is to be marketed to the international audience, it will be important to at least develop efficient and comfortable transportation links between the regional attractions. There is potential here to go one step further and develop a unique transportation system, such as a luxury steam train, between the attractions which would itself become an attraction and a part of the overall vacation experience.

In addition to transportation between attractions, a direct air transportation link between Canada's port-of-entry in Vancouver and Jasper must be considered.